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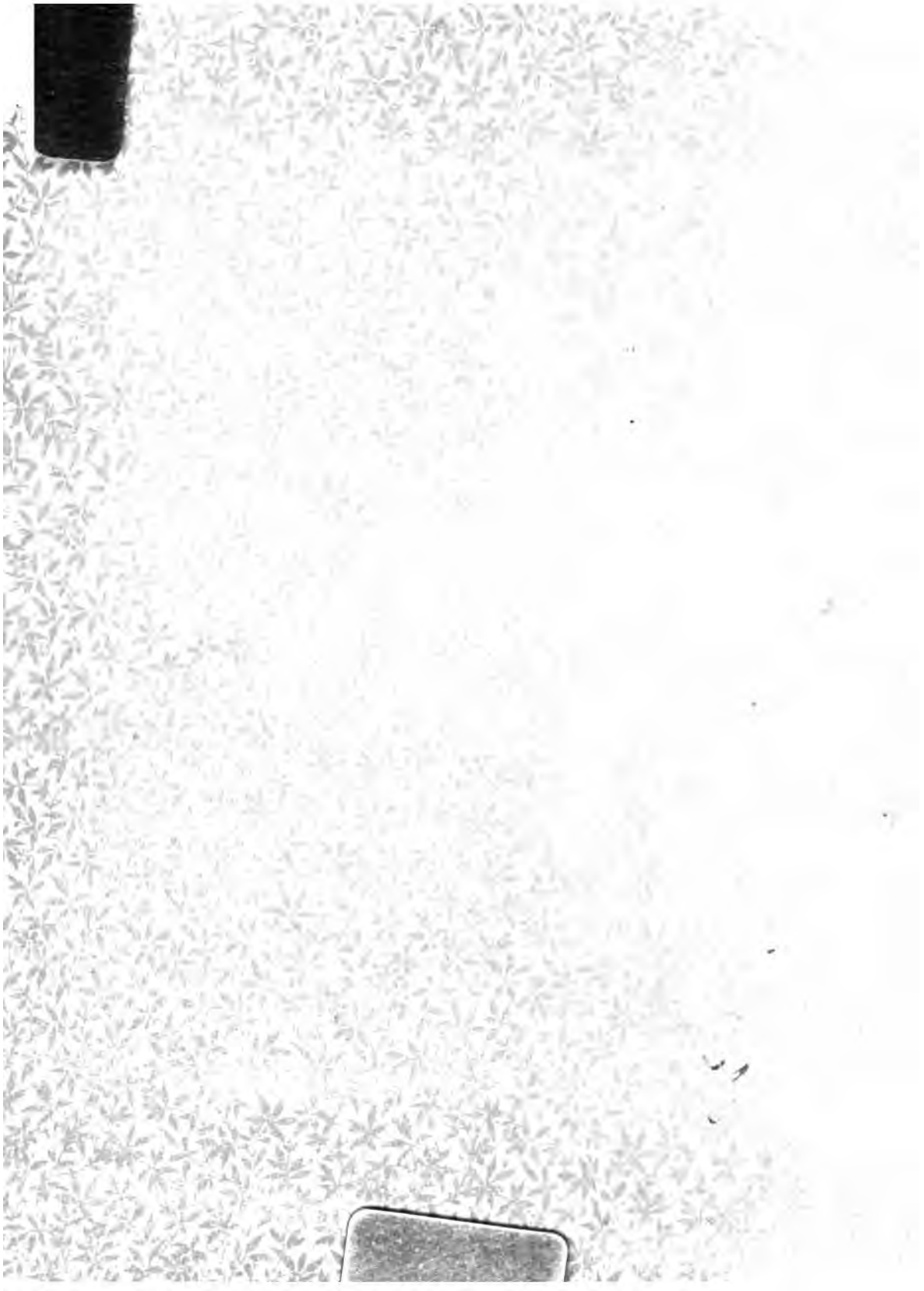
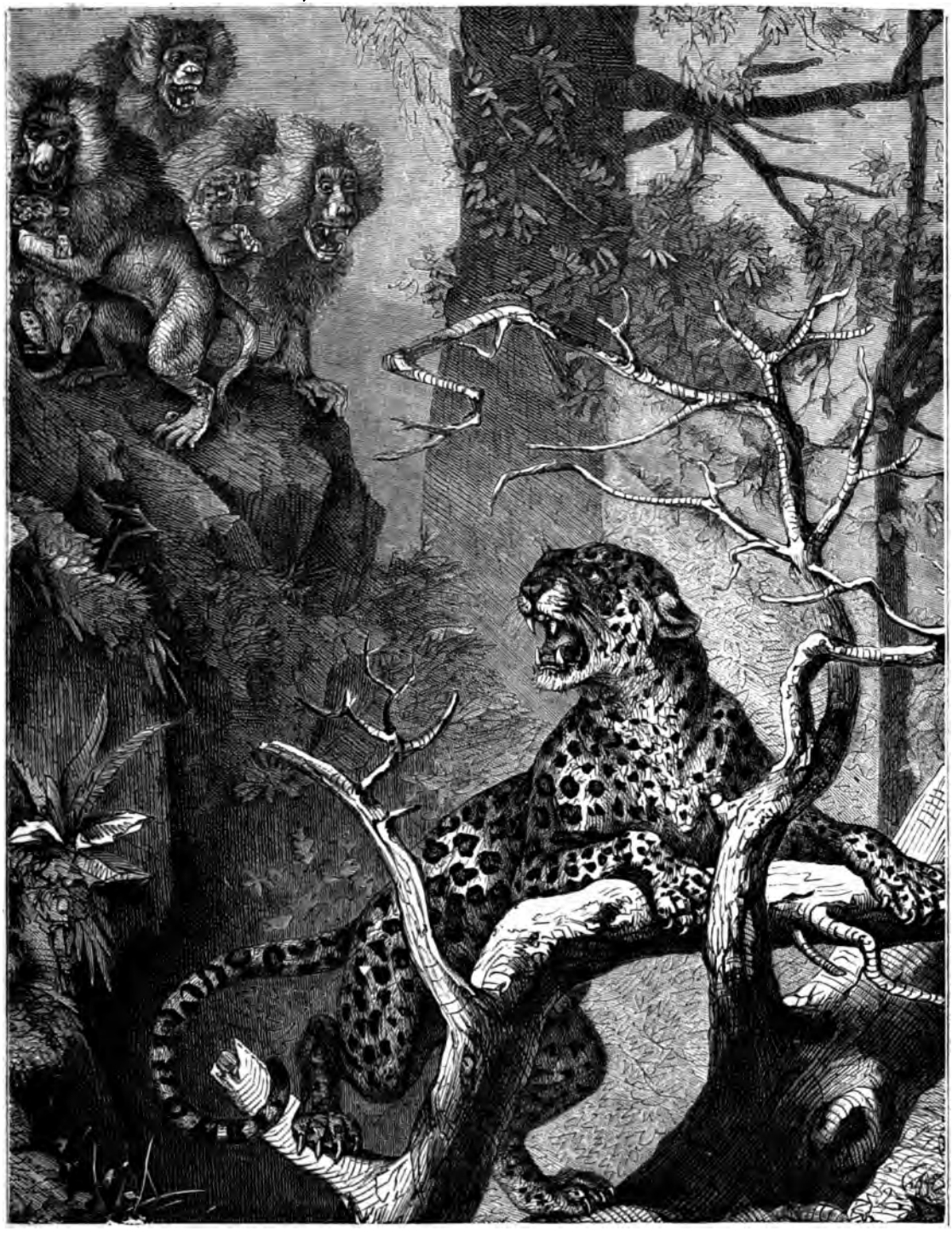
THE CHILD'S ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN





Frontispiece.

THE CHILD'S

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

By BEATA FRANCIS,

AUTHOR OF "SLYBOOTS," "FABLES AND FANCIES," ETC.

BIBLIOTHECA
JAN 81
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STRAHAN AND COMPANY LIMITED

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1881

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INTRODUCTION.

A LITTLE boy in a sailor's suit, with a very curly head, fidgeted about, standing first on one foot and then on another, near a lady who was drawing at a table, and at last he said,

"There 's no east wind to-day, Aunt Alice."

"I 'm very glad to hear it, Charlie," answered Aunt Alice, without looking up from her drawing. Then a little girl about a year older than the boy came out of the corner of the room where she had been playing with her doll, and the children looked at one another with long faces. Aunt Alice had not taken the hint that Charlie's remark was intended to convey.

"But, Aunt Alice," said Nelly at last, "do you remember what you said about the wind?"

"Nothing very complimentary, I should think," said her aunt, still intent on her work. "You are standing between me and the light, dear child."

Nelly moved with a mournful glance at Charlie: how very obtuse Aunt Alice was this morning! At length, grown desperate, Charlie spoke again.

"You said it was too cold then, but that when the east wind changed and the weather was warmer, you would take us to town to see the Zoological Gardens."

"So I did," said Aunt Alice, "and so I will; but I don't trust the wind yet. We must wait till the weather is really settled. Let me see, this is the seventeenth of May; on the first of June we will go, if your mother gives leave."

The 1st of June! thirteen whole days to wait! The children's thanks were polite, but not very warm; it seemed such a long time. However, they thought of a plan to make it pass as quickly as possible. Charlie drew twelve ugly cross faces on his slate representing the days till the end of the month, and then a round jolly face, smiling from ear to ear, with the *1st of June* written under it; and every day he and Nelly rubbed out one of the ugly faces, and it was so nice to see the row getting shorter and shorter. Meanwhile all preparations were made by kind Aunt Alice for the expedition, and some little neighbours of the name of Brown, and some cousins who lived near, were invited to join the party. At length there was only one ugly face left on the slate, and Nelly and Charlie were in the highest possible spirits. Charlie's delight manifested itself in the performance of a feat in

which he indulged on grand occasions, namely, hopping downstairs backwards, while Nelly stood at the top admiring. Unhappily it occurred to Charlie to astonish her by an improvement on the usual performance: instead of contenting himself with one step at a time, he attempted two. Twice he succeeded, to Nellie's unspeakable admiration; but the third time his foot slipped, and backwards he fell down, down, down! and at last lay at the bottom of the long flight, white and senseless.

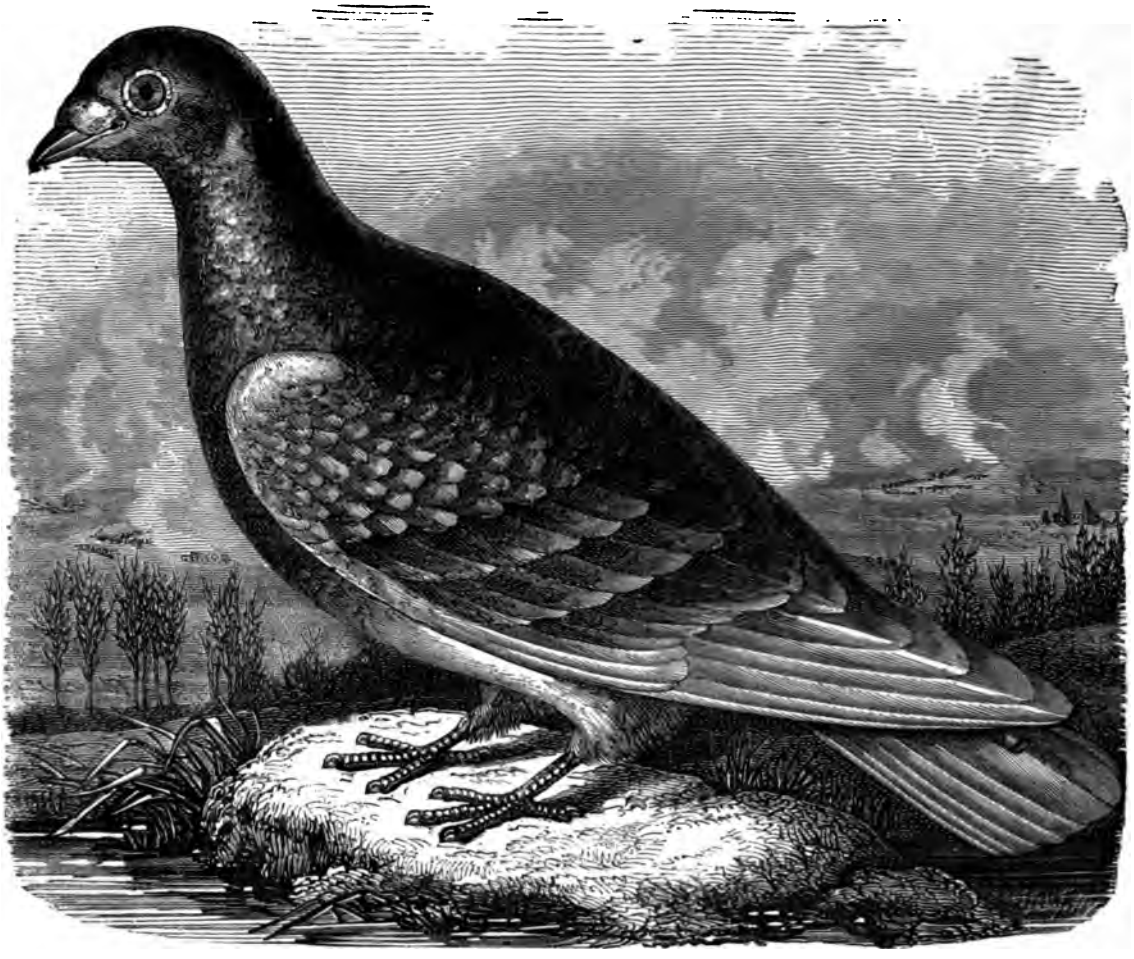
In her agony poor Nelly almost threw herself after him; her shrieks rang through the house and brought mother, Aunt Alice, and the servants from all directions. Poor Charlie was carried to his little bed, and the doctor was sent for, and terrible minutes followed, for at first all feared that he was killed. By-and-bye, however, he opened his eyes, but the doctor said his back was injured and that he must lie still for months. Nelly was not allowed to see him till the next day, and then he looked at her with a smile and asked her if she had rubbed out the last ugly face on the slate; but poor Nelly had no heart to rub it out by herself. All her pleasure in the prospect of the expedition was gone. At first Aunt Alice had proposed to give it up altogether, but mother said she wanted the house very quiet, and that it would be better for her to take the children as she had promised. The 1st of June was a beautiful day, and all the children, except Nelly, were in the highest spirits, and when they had once been told that Charlie was better, and had pitied him for having to stay at home, seemed to forget all about him; but poor Nelly could not raise a smile, and as she fed the Polar bear a big tear fell on the bun she dropped him. There was no pleasure in seeing the wild beasts dine without Charlie to share the excitement. The colours of the parrots had lost all their brightness in her eyes, and even the Monkey-House had no charms for her. Kind Aunt Alice saw how sad poor Nelly felt, and thought of a plan to cheer her.

"I'll tell you what we will do, Nelly," she said, "you and I. We will look at all the animals very carefully, and when we go home I will begin to draw them, and you shall help me to remember what we saw, and then I'll make them all into a scrap-book for Charlie, and write little descriptions of the creatures and their habits to amuse him with when he is better and has to lie on his back for such a long time."

Then poor Nelly's face brightened for the first time, and she examined all the creatures with interested eyes, and whenever she came to any which specially pleased her, she said, "Oh! Aunt Alice, you must put this one in the scrap-book." And this was how the "Child's Zoological Garden" came to be made.

THE WESTERN AVIARY.

On entering the principal gate of the Zoological Garden, and turning to the right, the first thing we see is an aviary, or huge cage, full of birds from many different parts of the world. Among these some of the most interesting are the Weaver-



Birds, from Africa, Cardinals and Sun-Bitterns from America, and Bower-Birds, Laughing Kingfishers, and many curious kinds of Pigeons from Australia.

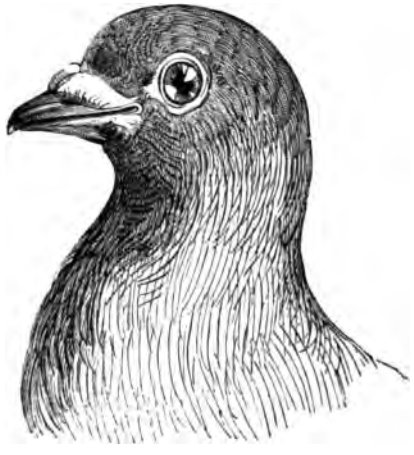
There is no tribe of birds more widely scattered over the world than Pigeons; they are to be found of one sort or another in all parts of the globe, except the very coldest regions. There are four different species in England—the Ring-Dove, or

Wood-Pigeon, sometimes called a Cushat; the Turtle-Dove, a bird of passage; and the small blue Rock-Pigeon, from which our domestic Pigeons originally come. The most interesting variety of these is the Carrier-Pigeon, whose love of his home, and instinct to fly straight to it from however distant a place he may be taken to, has

PURE BLOOD: LIEGE.

PURE BLOOD: ANTWERP.

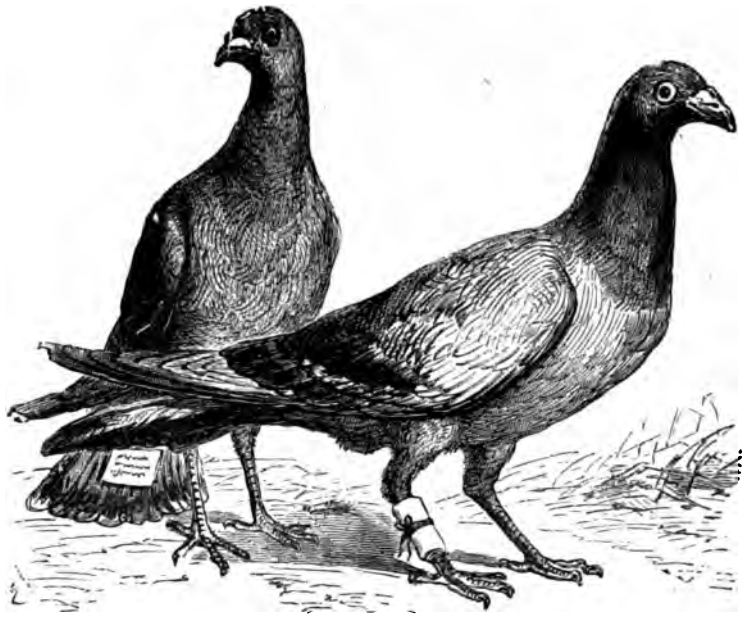
PURE BLOOD: ENGLISH.



CROSS BLOOD: ENGLISH-LIEGE.

made him so useful to man. He travels at the rate of a mile a minute. The value of these birds as messengers was discovered a very long time ago, and in the days before railroads and telegraph-wires were invented, they were of great importance. Even in these days, in times of war, they do good service. At the famous siege of Paris by the Prussians, in the year 1870, when all telegraphic communication was

stopped, Pigeons were constantly flying over the city with despatches, fastened round one leg or under the tail. These despatches were generally photographed on such a tiny scale that they could only be read with a microscope. Sometimes



ANTWERP-LIEGE BIRDS, WITH DESPATCHES.

messages are fastened under the wing. There is a sad story of a Pigeon who brought the news of the Battle of Waterloo to England, and dropped dead from exhaustion when she landed. A very pretty poem has been written about this, how—

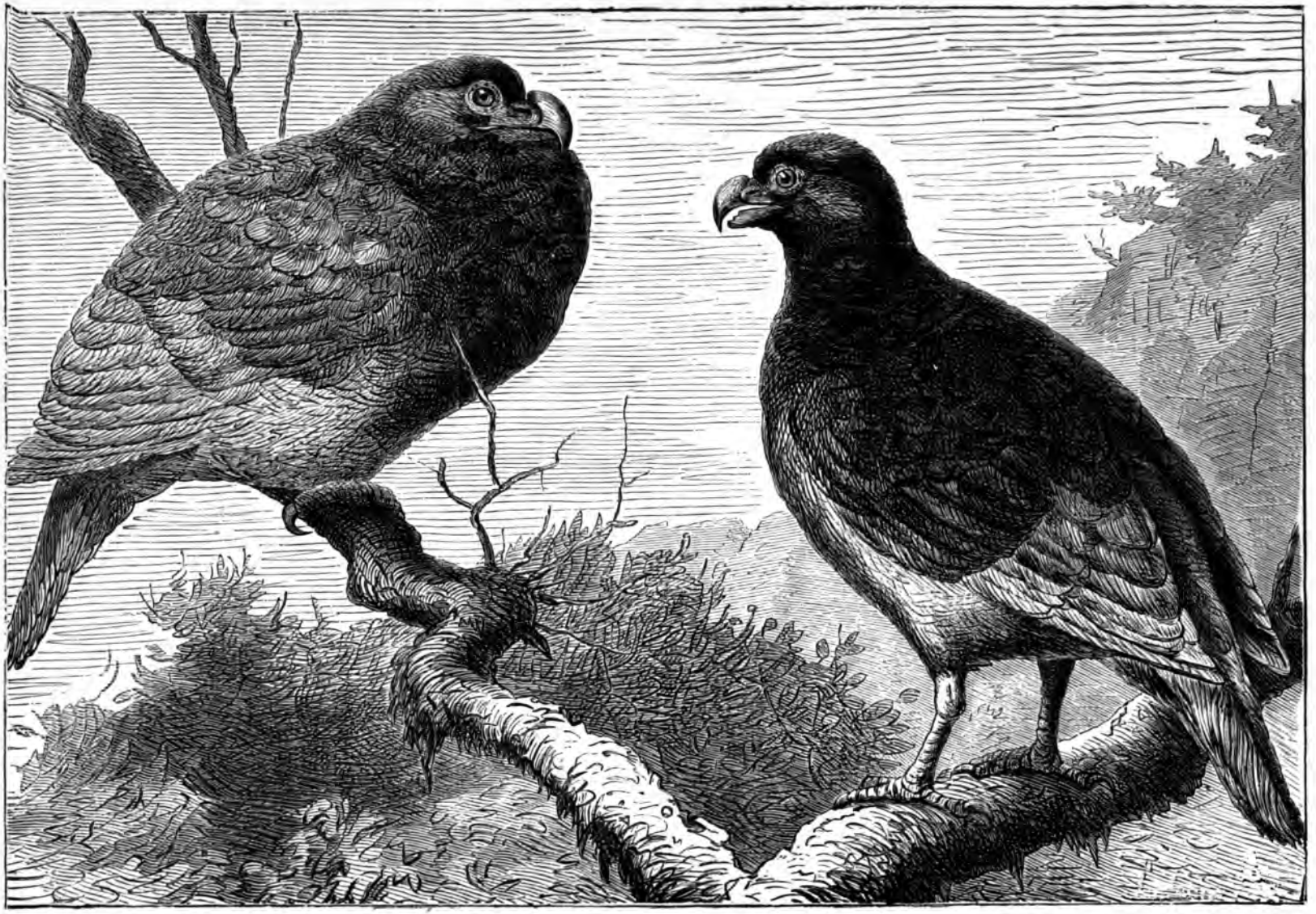
All in the merry month of June,
  The great glad Nineteenth morn,
Through London's grey, at break of day,
  The news is swiftly borne.

What though three hundred windy miles
  Are passed without delay?
The conscious bird, by duty spurred,
  Holds right upon her way.

And now, at length, with bursting heart,
  Her resting-place in sight,
With downward swing, on sloping wing,
  She sweeps to end her flight.

* * * * *

The dead lie on the battle-field
  'Neath many a new-heaved mound,
Where Britons' blood, on foreign soil,
  Has made a "holy ground."

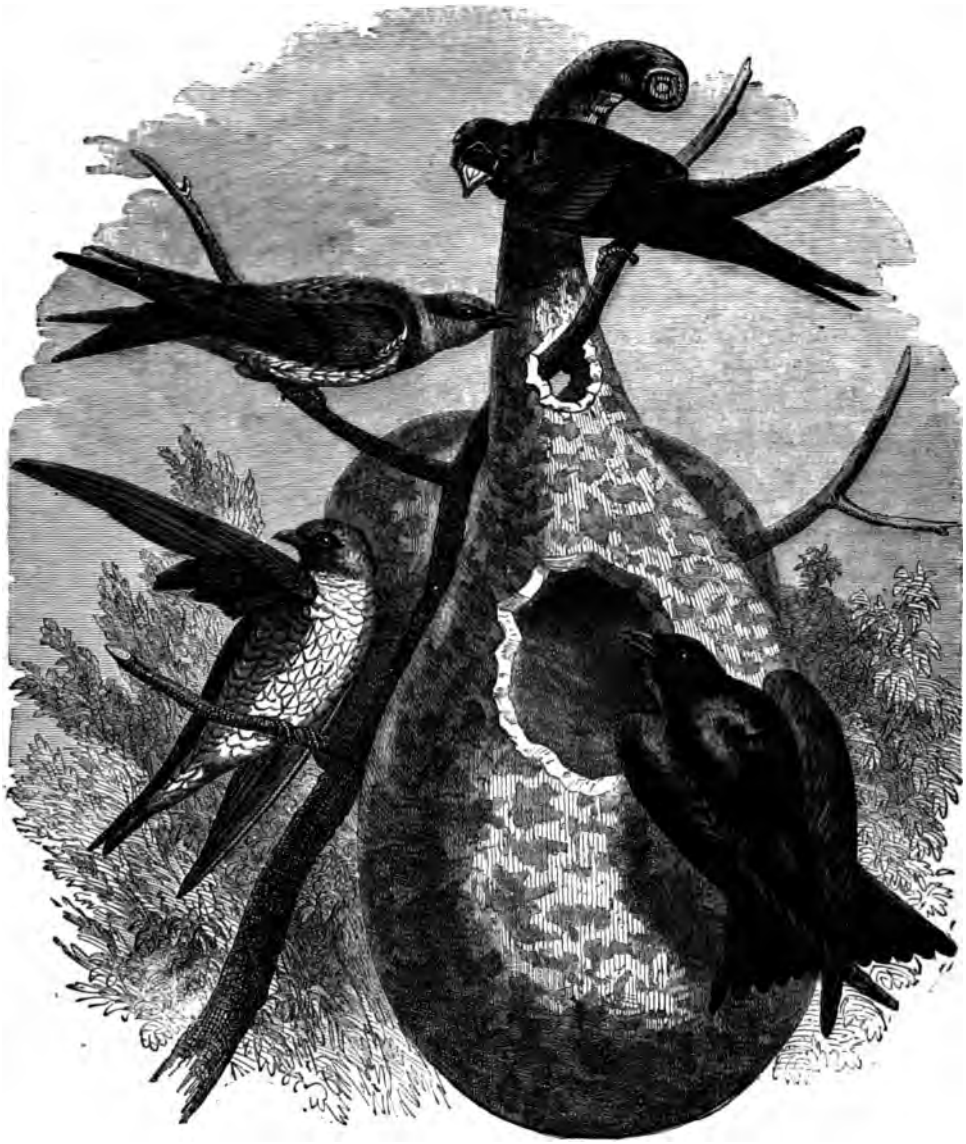


All honour grace their memory;
And yet, why praise them more
Than her who fought for the news she brought,
And died on her native shore?

During the races in Paris Pigeons are always dispatched to the betting clubs with the names of the winning horses, as they are found to manage the business quicker than the telegraph company. A friend of mine in the Champs Elysées caught a Pigeon on her balcony, where it had lighted to steal her bird's food. She kept it a little while before she found out that it had a number stamped on its wing, and a sealed packet fastened underneath it. As soon as she discovered this she let it go, and we must hope it arrived safe at its destination; but I am afraid it was not quite such a trustworthy bird as most of its race!

In Australia the Pigeons are extremely beautiful, some of them as gaily coloured as parrots. There is the New Guinea Pigeon, of a pale blue, with a very fine crest, and as big as a goose; and the little pink-headed Dove, who wears a red satin skull-cap on his head. The smallest is the tiny "Peaceful Dove," about the size of a missel-thrush, and the most brilliant of the fruit-eating tribe. Its head and neck are pale blue, breast purple, back and wings green, sides and wing-cases orange, and feet pink. An Australian friend of mine, when travelling in the bush, shot two brace of these and sent them to a lady in Sydney, who wrote to him, to his great amusement, "Do you know that the *parrots* you sent us made an excellent pie?" The nicest to eat of all is the Wonga-Wonga, whose flesh is as white as a pheasant. In America there is a kind of Pigeon called the Passenger, which comes in such enormous flights as to be a perfect plague. They make a noise with their wings like a high wind at sea, and darken the air round, eating up everything in the way of grain and fruit that they come across. After these inroads, at sunset they return to one of their roosting-places in the forest, frequently hundreds of miles distant. Here the inhabitants watch for them, and shoot them and knock them down by thousands; and when they and their pigs have eaten as much as even they can manage, the wild creatures, foxes, lynxes, racoons, bears, and opossums come to feast on the remains. There are many pretty stories of tame Pigeons and their gentle ways. A lady told me of one who formed a warm friendship with her cat. When a family of kittens arrived, the Pigeon would brood and coo over them as if they were her own children, and would allow no one to approach them. The end of this story, however, was very sad, for the poor Pigeon, thinking to find all pussy-cats as affectionate as her own friend, went confidently up to a stranger, and was killed.

There is a tribe of birds, of which we find specimens here, called "Weavers," on account of the way in which they make their nests. They are found in different



THE BAYA, OR PHILIPPINE WEAVER-BIRD.

THE TAILOR-BIRD.

parts of the world, chiefly in India and Africa. They are wonderfully clever and dexterous with their beaks, which they use like shuttles, in order to interlace the fine stems of the grasses, and form a fabric which it is very difficult to tear. The work, if you examine it closely, looks most complicated and difficult; but the little workman is very quick about it, passing his beak in and out through the substance as rapidly as possible. These woven nests are made in various forms, some like purses with openings at the sides; some are shaped like oil-flasks, and some are simply long sacks. Some Weavers suspend their nests from the twigs of tall trees overhanging the water; others are supported on the stronger branches, often in clusters together. The object of these skilfully-made nests is to protect the eggs and the young from the tree-snakes, which abound in the same parts of the world where we find Weaver-Birds. One of the most curious of this tribe is the Sociable Weaver-Bird, found on the banks of the Orange River. These birds work together in numbers, and weave a huge nesting-place in the form of an umbrella; and under this common roof each pair makes its own particular nest, with the same coarse grass of which the roof is made. A French traveller, Le Vaillant, mentions having found one of these wonderful constructions with three hundred and twenty cells in it, each cell being the property of a pair of birds. The Baya, in the picture on page 8, is found in most parts of Hindostan. In shape he is like a sparrow, with bright yellow plumage, and thousands flying together in the tropical sunshine have a very brilliant effect. They hang their flask-shaped nests, in the most clever way, at the very end of a branch, generally of a date-tree or an acacia, so as to protect it more effectually from serpents, monkeys, and squirrels. Dr. Smith gives a very curious account of the Red-billed Weaver-Bird of Southern Africa. It is never seen but in company with herds of buffaloes. Wherever he found it, it was always in attendance on these animals, flying over them or perched on their backs, employed in searching for insects in the hide of the great beast, who took no notice of his little companion. These little birds are very useful to their big friends, for when anything unusual appears, and the bird takes alarm, he immediately flies up: instantly all the buffaloes raise their heads to ascertain the cause. If it is only something to frighten a silly little bird, they take no further notice; but if it is anything of real importance, they take flight in a body, accompanied by their small friends.

The Kingfisher tribe, of which there are various specimens in the aviary, all resemble one another very much in their general form and long pointed bill, but vary in their plumage and modes of life. We are all proud of our own beautiful Kingfisher, which is found in most parts of Europe. Wherever there is a river or stream flowing through cool green meadows, there flashes past from time to time this lovely bird, all its bright colours glittering in the sun. It looks such a fairy

creature that one would not expect it to have a tremendous appetite; but it is really one of the hungriest of birds, and devours immense quantities of fish, which it catches with wonderful cleverness. It generally remains sitting quietly on some stump or branch of a tree overhanging the water, and watches with the utmost patience for the best moment to make a plunge. It may be minnows gliding past in shoals—roach, and dace, or gudgeon, or trout lurking under a stone or the shadow of the bank. Presently one rises to catch a floating insect, and down darts the glittering head like a flash of light, plunges for an instant under the water, and returns to its perch with a fish firmly fixed in its bill. It then kills it by knocking its head several times against a branch, and twisting it round swallows it whole. Sometimes Kingfishers will hover over the water before darting down on their prey, and people used to fancy that they did this in order to attract the fish by the

THE KINGFISHER.

brightness of their plumage; but this was a great mistake; for, in the first place, fishes cannot see an object just above them; and next, if they could see it, there would be nothing gay to look at in a Kingfisher, for all the brilliant feathers are over its neck and back—underneath it is quite a sober bird. Kingfishers make their nests, if nests they can be called, in the quietest nooks they can find, such as sheltered spots of the river among alders and willows. In the side of the bank they make a hole and a long burrow, sometimes taking possession of one already made by a water-rat, and at the end of this, without anything soft or warm round them, the hen bird lays five or six eggs of a pinky-white colour. While the hen is sitting, the cock bird supplies her with food, and very hard he works at it. By the time the young ones are hatched she is surrounded with pellets of fish-bones, which she finds indigestible, and rejects according to the curious habit which Kingfishers share with

owls. This used to make people think that they made their nests of fish-bones. When the young are hatched they are like other young birds, clamorous and ravenous for food, and both parents have to work very hard to supply them. However, their gay plumage comes very early, and they are soon able to fish for themselves.

When winter sets in, and his own streams and rivers freeze, the Kingfisher does not leave the country, but wanders from the interior to the coast, especially to the south of England. The Kingfishers of other countries are none of them more beautiful than ours, though some of them are very gay too. The "Sacred Kingfisher" of the South Sea Islands is pure white on the throat and breast and upper part of the body, with the back, tail, and wings bluish-green, and a sort of hood of brownish-green on its head. These birds live in woods and perch on the cocoa-nut palms. They live chiefly on very small flies, which they catch when they are loaded with the flowers of the palm, and are therefore taken at a disadvantage. Then there is a kind in Java which lives partly on fish and partly on water-insects: and there is an American one which feeds on butterflies, at which it darts, and spears with its long bill. But the strangest of all this tribe is the "Laughing," or Gigantic Kingfisher of Australia. This bird, who resembles a Jay in plumage, is commonly known by the name of the "Laughing Jackass" or "Bushman's Clock," and a very funny bird he is. You can see this at once by the expression of his face. He cannot plunge into water for fish, but lives on reptiles and insects, and is particularly clever in killing snakes, which makes him very useful as well as amusing. His great peculiarity is his extraordinary note, which is like a half mocking, half boisterous sort of laugh. An Australian traveller described these birds, and his encounters with them in the bush, in this way: "When he has broken in on me just at the moment of some sporting disaster with his strange laugh, half nasal, half guttural—He-he-he! ho-ho-ho!—I have sometimes been carried away by the wild fancy that some malignant wood-sprite was chuckling over my troubles. Our English Jay can laugh a little; so can our great green Woodpecker, who doubtless owes his name of 'Yaffle' to that peculiarity; but for reckless rollicking fun, with a dash of elfish malice, there is nothing like the laugh of the Australian Kingfisher. You are standing, perhaps, gun in hand, in a leafy solitude by some creek flowing dark under the gum-trees. The hush of nature round you is almost painful; you would welcome the leap of a fish or the flap of a bird's wing to break the dead stillness. Suddenly a low purring note like the cooing of a dove, catches your ear,—it stops, recommences more loudly, becomes a crow—a hoarse laugh. It is answered from a neighbouring tree, another and another voice strikes in; and you find yourself the centre of an uproarious ring, whose hearty ear-piercing mirth prompts you

alternately to laugh and to fly into a passion. You wonder that you had not noticed the birds before, but they perch pretty high and on large boughs. Hour after hour will one of them sit motionless, his head half buried in his ruff of neck-feathers, only the quick glance of a restless eye showing that he lives. But let a snake or a lizard glide through the long grass under his perch, and he drops on the enemy with a stroke of the bill so heavy and sudden that he generally has it his own way in the struggle, after which he performs the quaintest triumphal dance over his prostrate victim!" In the Zoological Gardens you may hear this funny bird laugh any day,

THE LAUGHING JACKASS.

but not, we should fancy, with quite the same glee with which he chuckles among his own gum-trees. Here are some verses which describe him and his habits very well:—

A strange bird sits where you all may see,
On the leafless bough of a great big tree;
With a long strong bill, and a tail quite short,
And an eye that twinkles with cunning and sport,
And feathers mottled with blue and grey,
Between a kingfisher and a jay.
And then his voice! You never heard
Such a song as comes from that curious bird.
He begins with a sort of purring note,
Like the "rookety-coo" in a pigeon's throat,
And then laughs out in the wildest way,—
Ha-ha! hee-haw! like a donkey's bray.
Learned men love Latin, you know,
So they christened the creature "Dacelo";

But bushmen in New South Wales prefer
To say, "He's a laughing jackass, sir!"
Although his note may be harsh and rough,
They find him a useful bird enough;
For he watches and catches and pecks and shakes
The nasty, poisonous, wriggling snakes.
Down he comes with his long strong bill,—
Woe to the snake he means to kill!
He gobbles him up like turtle fat.
Wouldn't you like such a bird as that?

CRANES AND STORKS.

THESE birds belong to different families, but are placed together for convenience, as the very long legs common to them all make the same kind of household arrangements desirable. They are all migratory birds; that is, in their natural state they seek warmer climates in the winter, and in the Zoological Gardens, in the cold weather, the delicate kinds are moved to more sheltered situations. There are a great variety of kinds here, amongst which perhaps the finest is the Mantchurian Crane, which comes from Pekin, and is a very favourite bird with the Chinese. The Common Crane used to be a frequent visitor to England in olden times, as we find from ancient writers. In 1507 we heard of nine Cranes being presented to a young lady for a wedding present, and about a hundred years later Sir Thomas Browne, in describing the birds of Norfolk, writes, "Cranes are often seen here in hard winters. It seems they have been more plentiful, for, in a bill of fare, when the mayor entertained the Duke of Norfolk, I met with cranes in a dish." I do not think they can have made a very nice dish, as they eat every sort of thing they can find. They are now rarely, if ever, seen in Great Britain; but in the North of Ireland and in Wales the Heron is generally called Crane.

The Heron is a big bird, measuring about three feet from the point of its beak to the tip of its tail, but it is very lightly built, so that it can support itself in the air with slight exertion. It would have little chance with its natural enemies, the falcons, its great size making it so easy a mark for them to swoop down upon, but for its power of soaring in the air as high as the hawks themselves, by which means it often escapes them. The Heron is such a gentle, peaceful bird, standing up to its knees in the cool water, still as a statue, that I always wonder why hawking him can have been considered such exciting sport. In the delightful description of a hawking party in Sir Walter Scott's story of "The Betrothed," in the last deadly

struggle between Hawk and Heron, Lady Eveleen Berenger has just descended from her palfrey, in accordance with the cruel custom of the time, to assist the Falcon by thrusting the Heron's bill into the earth, and breaking his legs, when the Welsh ruffians seize her and carry her off. When I read this story as a child, I always looked upon the appearance of the Welshmen at this moment as a judgment on Lady Eveleen, and felt most grateful to them. Who knows but that the poor Heron may have escaped after all?

There are several other kinds of Herons occasionally found in England besides the common one, but they are all rare. One specimen of the Buff-backed Heron was shot in Devonshire. This is a most charming little bird, and is found in Asia, Africa, and the South of Europe. It follows the cattle in the fields, and returns with them to their stalls. A French naturalist tells us that he knows no prettier sight than a group of these graceful little birds arranging themselves in a circle round a black ox, half buried in the long grass at midday, watching it, and defending it from the attacks of all sorts of worrying winged insects. The solitary one shot in Devonshire had been seen for several days in the same meadow, attending some cows.

The Blue Crane of Australia, commonly called a "Native Companion," is as serene and stately in his ordinary demeanour as the Heron, and will stand by the hour on one leg, as grave and sober as you please. But, like most of the birds of Australia, he possesses an innate love of fun, which will break out occasionally. All at once his solemnity deserts him, and there is no gesture too outrageous or too comical for him to indulge in. When he performs these antics alone it is funny

enough, but an eye-witness tells me that he has seen as many as thirty in a meadow all joining in the wildest of dances. One of the party would start with a ridiculous *pas seul*, flapping his broad wings, tossing his head, springing high into the air, and "kicking up behind and before;" a second would follow suit, and they would "set" to each other and perform a frantic *pas de deux*. Then the excitement would spread through the party, till every stiff form had become a figure of fun, sidling, sprawling, jigging, curvetting, and pirouetting in most laughable fashion. I have been assured that they have been seen to turn completely head over heels, like the tumblers in the streets!

These birds are friendly and easily tamed, whence their name, and are often made pets of in Australia; but they are rather rough, and apt to give disagreeable pokes with their strong bills.

The Stork is to be found in all parts of the world, except in North America. It is very rarely seen in England now, but is very common in most parts of Europe, particularly in Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, where the Stork is as much a household word as our robin redbreast. They build a great deal on chimney-stacks, and in Holland it is believed that if the Stork leaves its nest before the usual time for migrating to a warmer climate, some misfortune will befall the household under the roof.

Many pretty fanciful things are told to children about the Storks, as we find in Hans Andersen's Danish stories. There is one charming one which tells how the Father Stork stood on one leg like a sentry before the nest on the chimney, and how the naughty boys came and pointed and hooted at them, and sang,

Stork, Stork, long legs!
  What are you about?
Your wife is in the nest there,
  Your young are peeping out.
One we'll hang,
  Then burn his brother,
We'll stick the third upon a spear,
  And then we'll shoot the other.

There was only one good boy, called Peter, who would not join, and said it was wicked to make fun of animals, and so the Storks brought him a little baby brother to reward him, and ever after the Storks were always called "Peter."

THE MONKEY-HOUSE.

MONKEYS are found in many different parts of the world, but only where the climate is very warm. The Monkey tribe is divided into three kinds—Apes, Baboons, and Monkeys. In the Monkey-house there are a great variety of creatures all living and chattering together very happily, and playing each other all sorts of sly tricks. There are the great Tailless Apes, such as the Gorilla, Orang-outang, and Chimpanzee, which can be taught to behave very like human beings, and will even imitate men in the bad habit of smoking. Little Orang-outangs learn to eat their bread and milk with a spoon, while they sit on their master's knee, as nicely as a child could do. I saw a Chimpanzee at the Gardens take a parasol from a lady and try to shut it up quite in the proper way. Even in their wild state they will sometimes walk a few steps erect like a man, though really they are not standing on their feet, but on their hinder pair of hands. Those that are caught young are very affectionate, and behave much like spoiled children. There is only one place in Europe where Apes are found, and that is on the famous rock of Gibraltar. The Baboons are not nearly such nice creatures. They have short stumpy tails and generally big heads, have harsh dog-like voices, and very savage tempers. Of Monkeys properly so called there are many sorts; some few are large and ugly, but most of them are amusing creatures enough, and some are very pretty. The little Marmoset is so small that it will go into the inside of a cocoa-nut. They skip nimbly about the trees like squirrels, and feed on the fruit and leaves. They have faces like a little old man, and a most wistful expression, and when tame have cuddling caressing ways which make them charming for pets, only unfortunately they are very delicate, and it is almost impossible to keep them warm enough.

The Monkey-house is kept very warm indeed, and is full of nice tropical plants and trees, to remind the creatures of their own countries; but even here the more delicate kinds are apt to die of a very bad cough. It is quite a sad sight to see a Mamma Monkey with a poor sick little one. Some of them, like our squirrels, have bushy tails, only for warmth and ornament; but others use their tail as a sort of fifth hand, and will swing by it from a branch. They are cunning creatures, but their greediness often leads to their being caught in a very funny way. Covered earthenware jars full of nuts or rice are set up for them, with small holes in the sides, into which they can just manage to slip one hand. Monkey pokes his taper fingers through the hole and grasps a handful; then finding he cannot draw it back,

begins screaming with all his might, but never thinks of letting the nuts go, while somebody comes up softly behind and catches him!

CHIMPANZEES FEEDING THEMSELVES.

Mrs. Helfer, in her amusing book of travels, tells us of a pet Monkey of hers who took special delight in using her brush and comb: he knew it was wrong, and would choose his opportunity very carefully when her back was turned, seize the

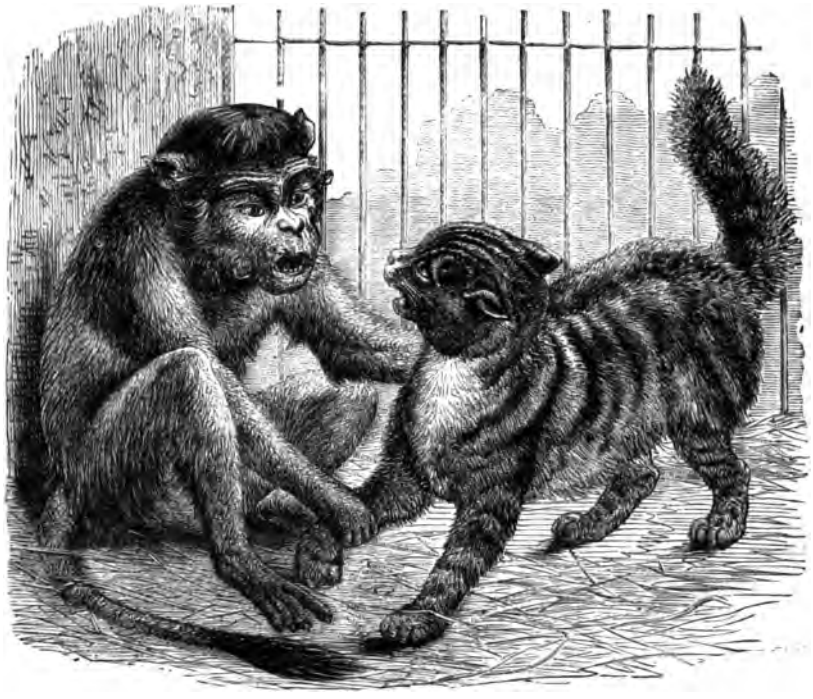
coveted articles, and run with them up a tree, at the top of which he brushed and combed his hair with great satisfaction.

A lady who had lived in South America told me a curious story about a very pretty kind of black and white Monkey, called a Diana Monkey. One day her Indian servants came to ask her to help her to catch one of these pretty creatures, who was in a tall tree near the house. They said that they had been trying in vain to entice it down for a long time; but that if their mistress went out it would be sure to come, as this kind of Monkey was so fond of white people. Of course the lady thought this was all nonsense; however, she went out with the black servants and stood under the tree, in the topmost branches of which she saw the beautiful Monkey. She had no sooner taken her stand, than he appeared to observe her with interest, and presently, to her astonishment, she saw him springing down in the most graceful manner from bough to bough till he reached the lowest branch, from which he gently alighted on her shoulder. From that moment he appeared perfectly tame, and entirely attached to his self-adopted mistress; and he became the greatest pet, from his peculiar gentleness and the grace of all his movements. After he had been with her for some time, there was a terrible storm of thunder and lightning, and, sad to say, the dear little Diana was found the next morning lying dead in a gallery where he slept, apparently killed by the fright.

There are many funny stories of the way in which Monkeys imitate men. Once a man was travelling in Africa with an immense quantity of woven red caps, which he had purchased in Spain to sell for the crowns of the turbans they wear in Turkey and Africa. Being exhausted with the heat, he lay down under a tree with one of these on his head for a nightcap. When he woke, to his horror he perceived the boughs of the tree covered with Monkeys with red caps on their heads. In a great rage he threw off his cap, and immediately to his joy all the Monkeys did the same. Another traveller tells us how he used to brush his teeth by a stream, and soon after saw a whole army of Monkeys doing the same, with bits of stick for tooth-brushes. Of all dumb creatures Monkeys most closely resemble human beings; indeed, there are some Indian tribes who believe that they need not be dumb unless they chose, but that they are determined not to learn to speak for fear they should be made to work!

There is a tribe of Monkeys in South America, who march from place to place in large numbers. When they come to a stream, some of the most experienced of the party survey it carefully, and having chosen a spot where the trees on each side are nearest to each other, one of the strongest monkeys twists his tail firmly round a branch, and hangs head downwards, another slides down the body of the first, twines his tail round him, and hangs also, then another comes in the same way, till a long

chain is formed: when they think it is long enough, they swing gently backwards and forwards till the last in the chain is able to catch hold of a branch on the other side of the stream. A regular bridge being now made, the whole troop pass over it, chattering and playing all sorts of tricks on the way. Finally the bridge loosens itself, from the side where operations were commenced, and swings and climbs over itself till all are safely landed.



Monkeys do not often attach themselves to other animals, but we have heard of their forming friendships with dogs and horses, and of an orang who was exceedingly fond of a cat. He used to sleep with her at night, play all sorts of tricks with her: sometimes he would carry her up into a tree in his arms without hurting her in the least.

During a long sea voyage a Monkey amused himself by riding the pigs about the deck, which they objected to exceedingly.

THE EMU-SHEDS.

THE Emu occupies much the same place among the Australian birds as the African and South American species of Ostrich do in their own countries. His figure, however, is more exactly that of the African Cassowary, for while the Ostriches have imperfect wings, which, though not strong enough to lift them from the ground, act like sails to catch the wind and assist their speed when running, the Emu has literally no wings at all, but is entirely covered with long downy plumes, shaped much like the hackles on a cock's neck. These feathers grow not singly, but two from one quill, which makes the Emu's coat very thick and heavy. When an Emu is grazing at a distance, so that his long legs and neck are not seen, he looks like a very large and rather dirty sheep. The young birds are very unlike their parents, being striped and much darker in colour. They are easily tamed when taken young, but are not safe pets, as they peck very severely with their short horny bills. Sometimes, too, they will frighten a horse by a strange sort of play, rushing at him with their heads lowered and all their feathers ruffled out, which gives them quite a terrible appearance. Emus are still found in considerable numbers on the wild plains in the interior of Australia, but they are everywhere diminishing as population spreads. This is partly owing to the great demand for their eggs, which are large and of a dark green colour, and used for many ornamental purposes. I dare say you may have seen them made into silver-mounted cups or little cases for fancy work. I must tell you a funny story about an Emu's egg. These strange birds are not uncommon in England now, and I believe have bred in several places; but it was very different fifty years ago, when communication with Australia was rare and slow. Among the first Emus brought to England were a pair which were placed about fifty-five years ago in Lady Londonderry's park at Roehampton. When the hen bird laid her first egg, it was thought quite an event; and as Lady Londonderry was in town, the gardener, who was left in charge, wrote her a note in exactly the following words:—

"MADAM,—

"And please your Ladyship the Emu has laid an egg, and seeing your Ladyship was absent I have put it under the goose."

This story was lately told in one of the newspapers, but incorrectly. A relative of my own saw and copied the original note, which was kept in a collection of oddities belonging to the Downshire family.

An Emu walking about in a confined paddock looks rather a heavy, ungraceful bird, but on his own wild plains he would astonish you by his swiftness. A horse must have great endurance, as well as speed, to be able to run one down.

THE SOUTHERN PONDS.

HERE, and in other ponds in different parts of the Gardens, we find an immense variety of Water-Fowl, from all parts of the world. I think every one must find some pleasure in watching the pretty ways of Water-Fowl. Even in the muddy little pool at the corner of a country farmyard one likes to see the little Ducklings —mere balls of yellow down—dabbling and splashing about, with perhaps an old hen running to and fro on the bank in great distress of mind, clucking vainly to her foster-brood, whom she evidently thinks in extreme danger. And when the little things at last paddle to the shore and follow her in search of food, it is very funny to see how briskly they waddle about,—now picking up a slug or a worm, now running open-mouthed after some flying insect. I always feel great sympathy with the child in Miss Ingelow's pretty poem, who says—

"I want a little yellow duck to take to bed."

But there are a great many Water-Fowl besides Ducks, and a great many kinds of Ducks besides those which the farmer's wife feeds up for market. Some of the Ducks collected from foreign countries are very beautiful, the Drakes especially wearing the

brightest colours, while Mrs. Duck goes comparatively plain. Among the most brilliant kinds are the Summer Duck, from Virginia, and the droll little Chinese Mandarin Duck, who looks as if he were dressed for Court,—all ruffs and frills, and as many colours as the rainbow. Some of our English species, though not as showy as these, are very handsome. The Wild Drake, or Mallard, which is common in our fens, and often thrives in captivity, is a noble-looking bird. The little Teal, with his glossy plumes, is also a great beauty. But the Sheldrake, gaily mottled with black, yellow, red, white, is, I think, the handsomest as well as the largest of these. His habits are very odd. The young are hatched and reared, not in a nest among hedges by the water-side, but in a hole in some steep bank, generally in an old rabbit-burrow. A pair used to breed year after year in a hill-side called Fardre, about two miles from Conway, in North Wales. The tenants of a house called Treganway used to watch for the day when the old birds brought their family for the first time down to the water, scrambling and stumbling down the steep banks. But the town of Llandudno has since sprung up, and the railway to it runs along the foot of Fardre, and no Sheldrakes breed there now. Indeed, they are only found on the very wildest parts of the British coast.

It would be quite a long task to count up all the varieties of the Duck family that may be seen swimming together—Pochards, Golden-eyes, Scoters, Widgeon—more than there is time to name. There are other families of Water-Birds which may be seen along with the Ducks. There are the Grebes, with pointed bills, and with fringed toes instead of webs to their feet. The commonest of these is the little Dabchick, often seen on rivers and rushy ponds. Its wings are very short, and only enable it just to flutter along the surface of the water, splashing as it goes. It has scarcely the pretence of a tail, and it has its droll little feet quite behind, so that it can dip under water in a moment. Sportsmen say that they dive at the flash of a gun, and they are certainly very hard to hit. The Divers are a good deal like the Grebes: they have the same strong pointed bill for taking fish, and the same funny position for their feet; but instead of having fringes to their toes, they are web-footed like the Ducks. One of them, the Loon, or Great Northern Diver, is really a noble bird, but I fear you will only see him stuffed in a museum. I never heard of his living in confinement. Both Grebes and Divers have a thick glossy down over their breasts and chests, more like very soft fur than feathers, and shining like satin. They are not good for food, having a rank, fishy taste; but I am afraid many of them are killed to make muffs and cuffs for ladies. The Water-Hen, or Moor-Hen, as some call it, belongs to yet another family, and may be seen about every sedgy piece of water. It is a lively, restless bird; its orange bill, and the peaked white tail, which it jerks drolly up and down, are sure to catch your eye. It swims

and dives well, but its feet are not webbed: in fact, it feeds more on the land than on the water, and roosts in trees. The feet are very long, with strong sharp claws. A sportsman told me that he had been much puzzled to understand the purpose for which these strong feet were given them. He at last satisfied himself that it was to enable them, when pursued, to hold on by roots and weeds at the bottom of the water. On one occasion he had hunted one along a deep ditch by the bubbles it raised, and having marked where it stopped, stripped his arm and felt for it till he grasped its body. He was astonished at the difficulty he found in dragging it away from its hold at the bottom, though it was quite exhausted by remaining so long under water. The Coot, or Baldiecoot, as the country folks call it, from the queer white wattle down its face, is a larger bird, but of much the same habits as the Moor-Hen. The young of both species are the funniest little black balls imaginable. The old birds are very careful of their broods; you will hear them give a sharp note of warning as you approach, and in a moment all the little dark puff-balls disappear among sedges, or under the floating leaves of the water-lily, while the mother is seen hurrying away from the spot to draw off your notice from her chicks. A friend of mine was trout-fishing, on a very windy day, in a pool near Barnard Castle, when a poor little Coot, after in vain trying to dive towards the shore, was hurried along by the wind straight to his boat. The mother followed it, screaming and fluttering, till actually within the length of the oars, and when my friend lifted the exhausted little creature on board, came closer still, and even popped her head over the gunwale. Of course he gave back his prisoner, and he said nothing could be prettier than the way in which she cuddled her weary nestling under her wing, and swam with it down wind to the bank.

Another large and amusing family of Water-Birds are the various Seagulls, some of them, as the Herring-Gull and the Greater Black-backed Gull, of very large size. Some of the species are well known to every one who has visited the seaside, though they are most numerous on the wildest and rockiest parts of the coast. In their wild state they rear their young on steep and almost inaccessible cliffs; they build no nest, but lay their eggs on the bare rocky ledges, and it is wonderful how each mother-bird knows its own eggs or young among so many of the same kind, often ranged side by side. Some of the species are known to breed not on the sea-coast, but on inland rocks, always, however, in a place which affords abundance of their favourite fish diet. For instance, there has long been a colony of the Laughing Gulls on Llyn Conway, a wild lake in North Wales, whence the river Conway flows: they breed on a steep craggy island in the middle of the lake. A curious thing happened within my knowledge with regard to these birds. A young man from the vale of Festiniog wanted some specimens of the eggs and young. About their hatching-time

he swam out to the island, pushing before him a sort of wooden tray to secure his booty. Landing safely, he had no difficulty in getting as many eggs and nestlings as he needed. But when he struck out again for the shore, he soon found that he would not be allowed to carry off his plunder in safety. The whole colony of Gulls surrounded him in the water, screaming fiercely, flapping him with their wings, and even pecking his hands and face. He assured my father that he would have been in imminent danger of his life had he persisted in carrying off his spoils. Luckily he had not got far from the island; so making a merit of necessity, he turned back to the rocky nesting-place of the Gulls, and replaced the eggs and young birds on the shore, after which he swam back to the mainland in safety. The old birds, he said, behaved quite rationally, for as soon as they saw that he was really taking the young ones home, they ceased to molest him, and contented themselves with hovering watchfully round.

In confinement Gulls will frequently breed and generally grow very tame. They seem always hungry, and scramble for the fish that are thrown to them in a droll greedy fashion; clawing, flapping, and screaming at the top of their voices. Though fish are their principal diet, they are by no means particular, and will make themselves very useful in a garden by picking up slugs and caterpillars.

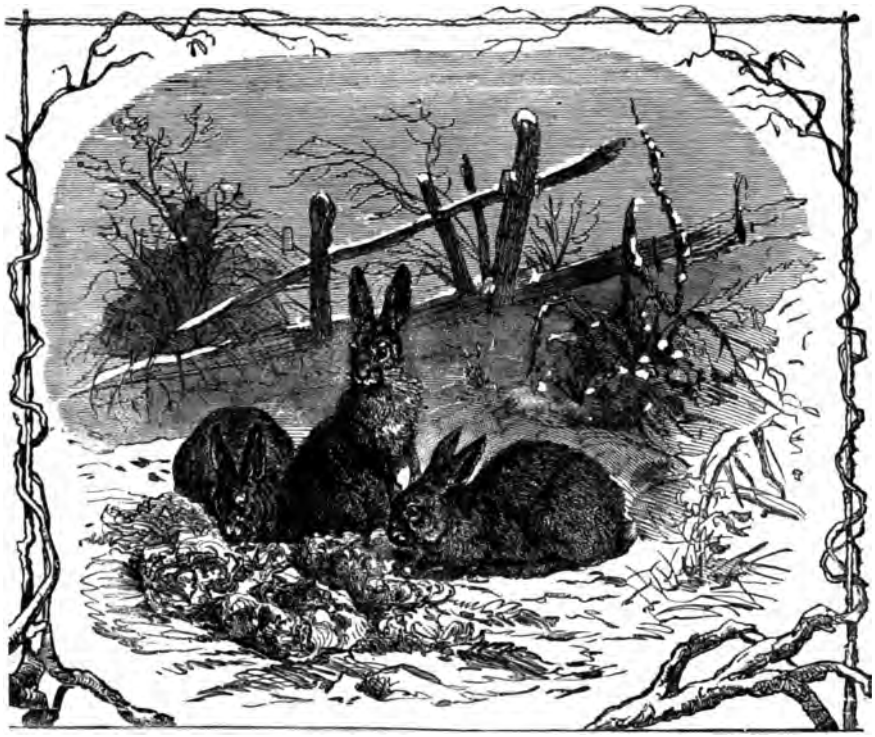
There are other large and interesting tribes of Water-Fowl, with which we shall make acquaintance in another part of the Gardens.

THE RODENTS' HOUSE.

THE Rodents, as their name implies, are a class of animals which gnaw, pare, and scrape down the substances on which they feed. For this purpose they are provided with long, sharp, front teeth with cutting edges. Hares, Rabbits, Mice, Rats, Squirrels, Beavers, and Porcupines are all Rodents; but many of these animals we must look for in other parts of the Gardens, in houses specially provided for them. There are two distinct species of Hares in Great Britain, the common Hare, and the Alpine Hare found in Scotland and the North; and there is, besides, a third sort found in Ireland. Though something like Rabbits in appearance, they are very different in their habits; they do not burrow or live in companies, as Rabbits do; each Hare lives by itself, except in pairing-time. She chooses a nice warm place under a bush or bank which is called a form, and there she lies, her fur being so nearly the colour of the herbage round her, that she would often be passed unnoticed, but for her bright, gleaming little eye. The Hare is particularly formed for swift

running, her hind legs being much longer and stronger than her fore legs; she can run much more easily up than downhill, and when pursued by the dogs always gets an advantage when they are ascending a hill. Her fleetness of foot has made her the heroine of many fables and moral tales, and as we all know, it does not always enable her to win the race. Slow and sure sometimes answers best in the end.

Mr. Ralston, who tells such delightful stories to children in London and elsewhere, tells an old Servian legend about a Hare, which is very funny. A long time ago people became very unhappy because they were not sure about the immortality of



the soul,—whether they would fade and die for ever like the flowers, or whether they might hope for another life. So they sent the Hare, because he can run so quickly, all the way to the moon, to ask her about it. And the moon answered, when the Hare had explained what he had come about, "Go and tell the people to take comfort, for as I wane smaller and smaller every night till I am only a tiny silken shred, and then disappear altogether, so will they decay and disappear; and as I appear again, and wax larger and larger till I am a full moon once more, so will they live again." And the Hare ran very quickly back to tell the people what the moon had said; but, being a stupid fellow, he forgot the last part of his message altogether, and told the people, who were anxiously waiting to hear what he had to say, that as

the moon waned smaller and smaller and at last disappeared, so they would disappear! After this, the people naturally became more unhappy than ever. At last the moon, finding the gloom that had spread all over the world, sent for the Hare and asked him how it was that her message had had no effect in cheering up the inhabitants of the earth, and made him repeat exactly what he had said to them. When she found how stupidly and incorrectly her message had been delivered, she was so provoked with the Hare, that she made a dash at him with her reaping-hook and cut his lip open; and that is why Hares have the slit in their upper lips to this very day, and the origin of the word "hare-lip." The hare, however, did not put up with the attack without showing fight; he flew at the moon and scratched her face violently with his front paws; and the moon, from having been a fair spotless disc, became all marked and seamed, just as you see her to the present day!

Hares are very easily tamed when taken quite young, and make very amusing pets. I daresay you may have heard of the poet Cowper's three tame hares, Tiney, Puss, and Bess. They all had very different characters, though they were so alike in appearance that only Cowper himself could tell them apart. Puss was very gentle and loving, and would allow himself to be petted and caressed and nursed when he was ill; but Tiney was always shy and rough, and apt to bite in return for kind attentions. Bess was amiable too, and the strongest and liveliest of the party. They would all three frisk and frolic together in the evening in a manner that cheered the poor poet, who suffered from ill health and low spirits. When Tiney died, he wrote an epitaph on him, beginning—

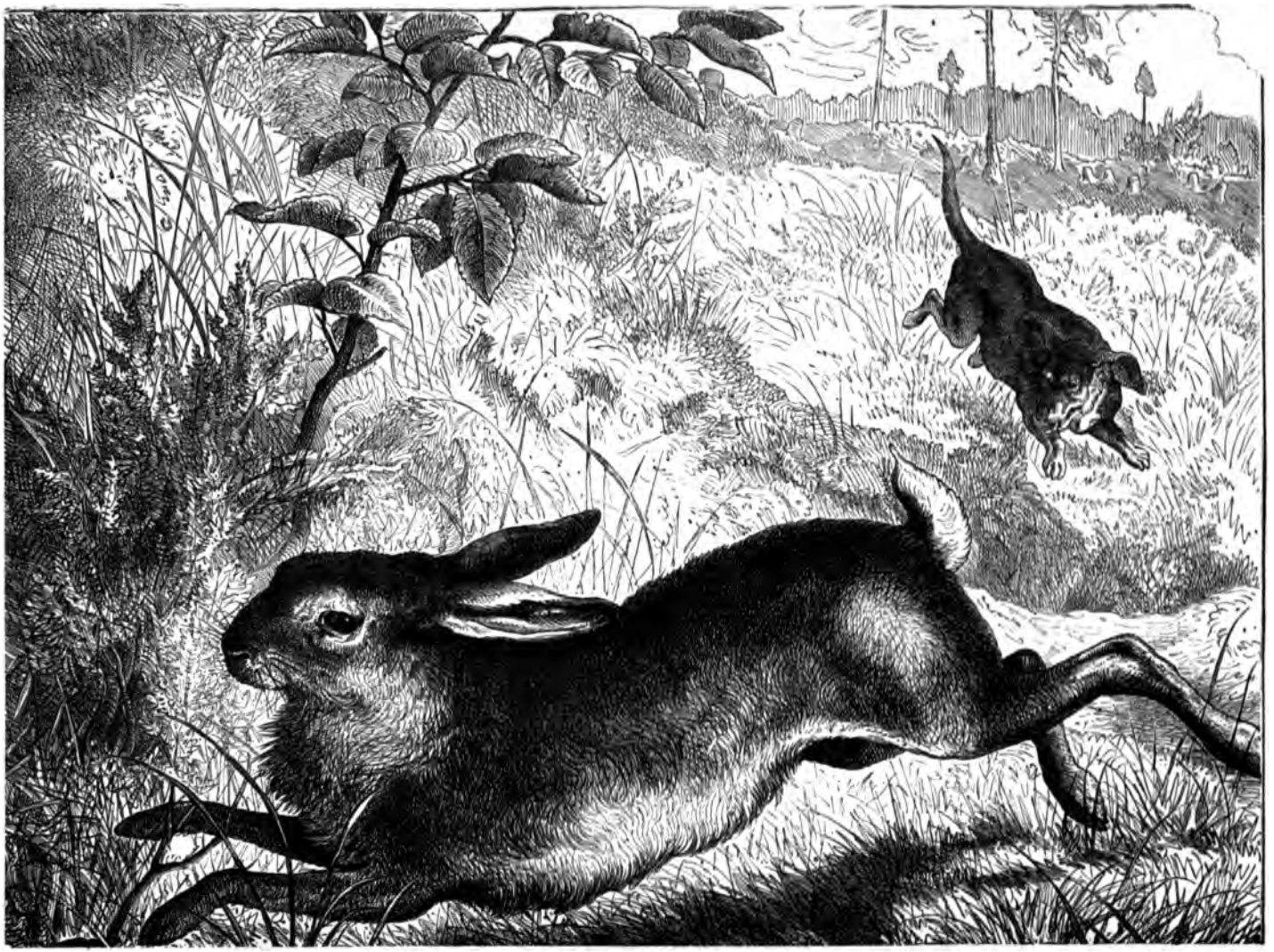
Here lies whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow;
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's hallo.

Then he gives a description of his diet and habits:—

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippin's russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing himself around.



POOR PUSS PURSUED.

His frisking was at evening hours,
  For then he lost his fear;
But most before approaching showers,
  Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
  He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
  And every night at play.

Young Hares are born, not blind and hairless, like Rabbits, but covered with fur, and their eyes ready to look about at once; and in two or three weeks they are ready to go forth into the world and shift for themselves. They eat, generally at night, young and tender grass, dandelions, parsley-stalks, pinks, fruits, and corn; besides all the things that Cowper mentions. In winter they strip the bark off the trees; but the favourite food of all others, with both Hares and Rabbits, is the laburnum. They will eat its leaves, flowers, twigs, bark and all. The Alpine Hare is smaller than the common Hare, and larger than the Rabbit. It is found on the Alps, in Sweden, Norway, and other mountainous countries. In our own islands it is chiefly found in the North of Scotland, and sometimes among the Cumberland hills. Its habits are between those of a Hare and a Rabbit: it has not the swiftness of the common Hare, but it leads the same solitary life, hiding in the clefts of rocks or under stones. Its food is much the same as that of the ordinary Hare; but during the winter it feeds upon several kinds of lichen, and on the seeds of different sorts of pine. As the winter approaches, it leaves the tops of the mountains and descends to warmer and more sheltered regions, though seldom low enough to be out of reach of the severe frosts. At this season its fur undergoes a complete change of colour. It is naturally of a grey tint, generally called blue; but in winter it becomes gradually and at length completely white, the white at first appearing in patches, and spreading till the whole creature is white, except its lips and the tips of its ears. In the spring the white fur is thrown off, and a new grey coat appears. Alpine Hares are less shy and timid than ordinary Hares, and more easily tamed.

The Rabbit, unlike the Hare, is a social and digging animal. Heaths, commons, and other places, having a sandy soil, easily excavated, are the places where they associate and form their underground city. They delight in steep sand-banks, overhung with brushwood and furze. The extent to which the ground is sometimes broken up by these little miners is wonderful, and it is said that a town in Spain was once destroyed by their work. They abound also in woods, from which they make excursions to the nearest corn-lands. The rapid rate at which they increase makes them really important to mankind both for their flesh and fur. The wild ones have

this advantage over other animals bred for the market, that they thrive best on very poor land. A Rabbit-warren, that is, a wide sandy heath or common devoted to

ALPINE HARES.

their increase and feeding, well managed, is a very profitable thing, particularly when the fur is of fine quality. There is one wild variety, known as the "Silver Grey," of

which the skins alone are worth considerably more than the common brown Rabbits, skins and all. But even the common kind have a very good sale for the table, particularly in our large towns, and though the fur is poor, it fetches something; indeed, the demand for Rabbit-skins by furriers of this country is so great, that hundreds of thousands are imported here every year from Germany and other parts of the northern and middle districts of Europe, where innumerable Rabbits are bred for the purpose. Rabbits generally remain in their burrows during the day, but about twilight they come out to feed, devouring much the same things as the Hares. Sometimes, however, after a summer shower has fallen and rendered the herbage soft and tender, numbers of them may be seen feeding aboveground in the broad day. There are few creatures so pretty and so playful, and, if you can hide yourself among the furze-bushes in one of their haunts on a summer evening, you are sure of a very amusing sight. A doe Rabbit will sometimes have five litters in the year, so that one may see them of every size, from wee things scarcely as big as a rat, to great heavy old fellows grown grey with age.

The little ones run in and out of the burrows all day, and look very pretty on a grassy slope in the sunshine, frisking and running races, and tumbling over one another like kittens. Now and then they have a quarrel, and show their little teeth and strike at one another with their fore paws. If one of the old folks sees a scuffle of this kind going on, he puts a stop to it, running up to the naughty little ones and boxing their ears right and left; and I have even seen the papa or grandpapa Rabbit who interfered in this way seize one of the youngsters by the ear and give him a good shake. But the old ones do not come out much till the evening. The does or mamma Rabbits, whom you may generally know by the ragged look of their fur, which they tear off to make the nests warm, walk straight out of the burrow without looking about or seeming afraid. But the old bucks are very suspicious, as if they fancied there was some enemy on the look-out for them. You may see one come just outside his door, then pull up short, drum with his fore feet on the ground, swing round on his hind legs, and in a moment disappear down the hole. They will do this several times before they get rid of their fears and begin to nibble the grass outside. Altogether they are most amusing creatures to watch. Tame Rabbits are not nearly so lively, but they are in great favour as pets; they are such soft innocent things, so fond of being coaxed and cuddled. They will take their food quite kindly out of your hand and nibble it very prettily; and the young families come so fast that there are always little ones to look at in the hutches. They are healthy creatures, and not at all particular about their diet, but care must be taken not to give them too much green and juicy food, and they should always have a saucer of dry bran with their greenery. There is a wonderful

ON THE ALERT.

variety in tame Rabbits, introduced by rabbit fanciers, of very different colours, sizes, and coats. Some are pure white with pink eyes, some black and white, some black, some buff colour.

Some are much admired for their long silky fur, while at the great Rabbit Shows nothing is thought so much of as a very long pair of hanging ears, sometimes as much as eighteen inches from tip to tip. These long-eared fellows are very large, but to my taste very ugly, and certainly very dull and stupid. The most sprightly varieties are those which are most like the wild race. Indeed, there are great numbers bred in confinement which it is very hard to distinguish from the wild ones. The latter, however, have the soles of their feet yellow, while the tame Rabbits have them white. I have been told that roguish dealers sometimes singe these white feet before sending the tame ones to market, that they may pass for wild ones fresh from the warren. But it does not really much matter, as the difference in flavour is very small when they are smothered in onion sauce. For my part, I like better to see them in the field than on the table.

And now, while we are among the Rodents, we must not pass over the Mice, the smallest quadrupeds of all, who make very good use of their sawing little teeth; so much so, unfortunately, as to make them very undesirable inmates of a house, in spite of their pretty looks and ways. The common House-Mouse eats all the same things that human beings do, and a great many others besides. It is said that stalks of wild mint, placed near cheese or other articles of food, will keep them off, and Italians place a bough of butcher's-broom round their bacon as a protection; but I am afraid the presence of a cat is the only safe remedy against these elegant but troublesome little animals: the mere smell of her coat will keep them away to a great extent. Many kinds of Mice are easily tamed, and make nice pets. A friend of mine, who is a Mouse-fancier, sends me an account of five different sorts, of which she made pets in her childhood, all of whose ways and habits she remembers distinctly and with great delight.

"When I was a very small child," she writes, "my father having heard, perhaps, how I used to lie with my face on the floor, watching a mouse-hole in the nursery wainscot, in fond hope of catching the 'dear little mousey' who lived in it, brought me a pair of White Mice, in their pretty little wire house. White Mice, as we all know, have pink eyes, like many white varieties of other creatures, such as white rabbits, cats, and even what are called Albinos among human beings—people born with white hair and eyebrows. These Mice are pretty little creatures, and easily made exceedingly tame, and the Italian boys who show them in the streets may often be seen with half a dozen or more climbing at once about their arms and shoulders.

"But they have one great drawback as pets: the unpleasant odour which always attends them, unless they can be kept in some light airy closet or window-seat, with great care in the cleaning of their cages. They will eat and drink all the same things as the House-Mouse, whom they closely resemble in all respects except their colour. I shall never forget my rapture when my White Mice made a nest, and were brought to me with nine baby Mice, all of whom would have gone into a large thimble. These Mice eventually became tamer and tamer, and, being allowed to stray about in the pantry, at last disappeared altogether. My father was afterwards told that piebald Mice had been seen in the house. I do not think this ever was proved, but I believe that such varieties (brown and white) are occasionally exhibited.

"When I was about nine years old we began to live in the country for a great part of every year, and were so happy as to take with us a governess, who was as fond of animals as we were, and was kindly interested in all the pets we were allowed to keep. Among these were specimens of the short-tailed Field-Mouse, which is remarkable for its thick head and short tail; its general colour is brown. It usually burrows near the surface of the ground, and our governess helped us to dig up the hole into which we had seen it run in a stubble-field, by which means we caught one, and I have always remembered with sorrow that the short tail of poor Toby, as we called him, was made shorter by a small bit being accidentally chopped off it during that process. These Mice increase amazingly fast, as many as twenty young ones having been found in a nest. They often do great mischief to the farmers by eating their peas, beans, and other crops when newly sown. In addition to our short-tailed Field-Mouse, we had also a long-tailed Field-Mouse. This is a very handsome creature, the largest of the British Mice. Its usual length is about three inches and a half to four inches and a half, without the tail, and the tail itself is from three to four inches in length. Its back is reddish-brown, while underneath it is white, and it has beautiful dark eyes, very large and prominent. Like its short-tailed cousins, this Mouse is an enemy to the farmers. I do not know whether it is the long or short-tailed Field-Mouse whose comfortable *ménage* is so charmingly described in Hans Andersen's story of Little Ellie. The tiny maiden, the size of her mother's thumb, having floated away on a water-lily-leaf, is 'taken in and done for' for the winter months in the Field-Mouse's snug winter home; but when the little maid found that the Mouse expected her to marry a rich little gentleman with a black velvet coat and an underground palace, who proved to be an ugly old mole, she escaped away on the back of a swallow.

"We had a third species of Field-Mouse, generally called the Harvest-Mouse, which is the smallest quadruped in Europe, being the smallest kind of Mouse.

"Mr. White of Selborne weighed one in a scale, and found that it was only one-

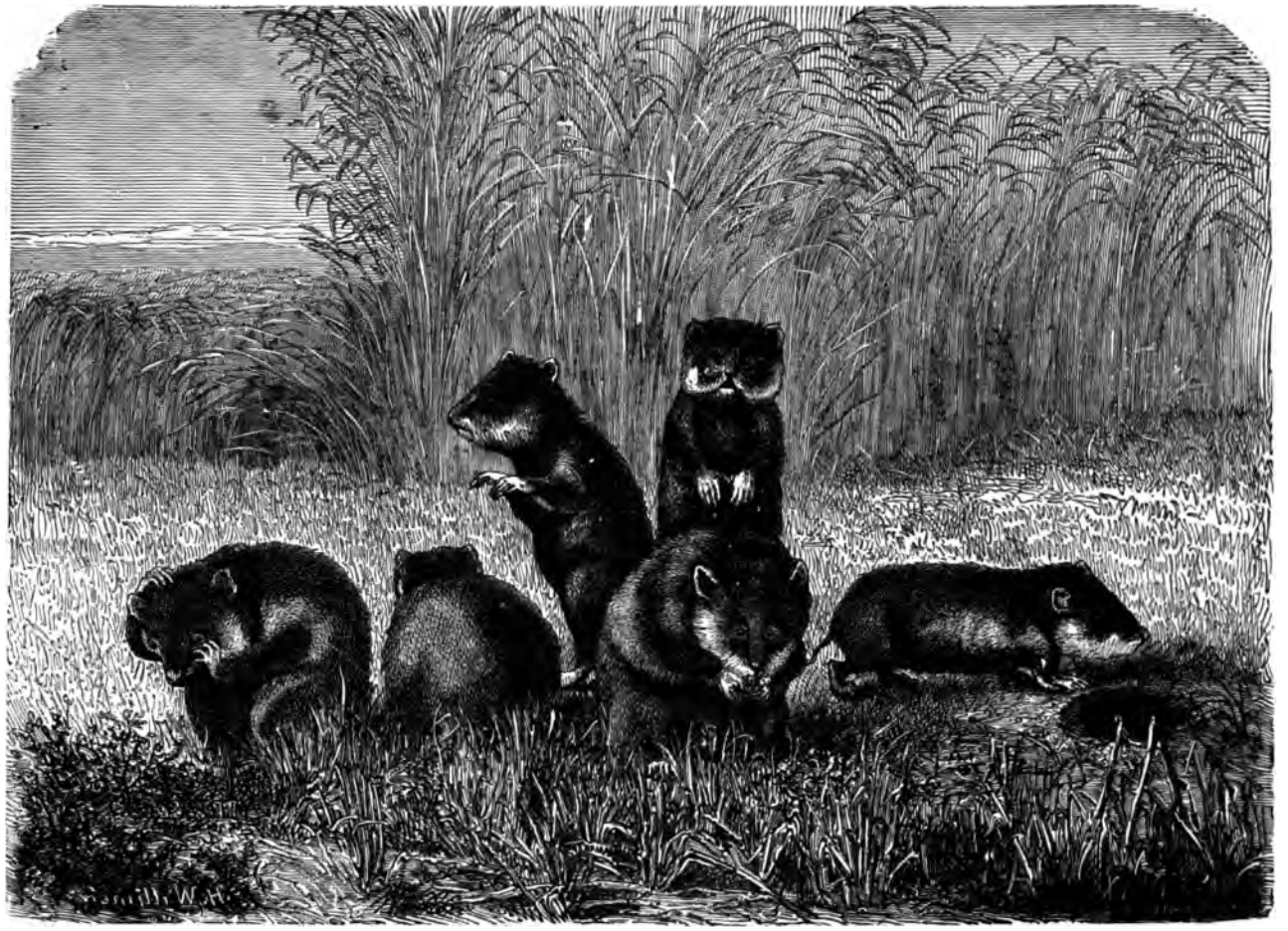
sixth of the weight of the Common House-Mouse, and that two of them together only weighed down one halfpenny; he procured one of their nests which was made of the blades of wheat, most artificially plaited, as he says, 'perfectly round,' and about the size of a cricket-ball, and so compact that it would roll about the table without being discomposed, though it contained eight little Mice that were naked and blind. It had no visible opening, and it was evident, he adds, 'that whenever the mother opened it to feed her young ones, she must afterwards have closed up the aperture with wonderful ingenuity.' This charming nest was found in a wheat-field suspended to the head of a thistle. In the winter the Harvest Mice burrow deep in the earth and make warm beds of grass, unless they succeed in getting into a corn-rick, which is always a grand gathering-place with them. Grain appears to be their favourite food, and it is believed that they store it (as well as other things upon which they subsist) in their holes, as the larger Field-Mice also do; which last, we found, would eat nuts, acorns, beech-mast, and many seeds or roots.

"All Mice in confinement should have either a little milk or a little water given to them; as when they are at liberty they obtain liquid from fruits and from the dew on grass.

"But to return to our fairy Harvest-Mouse.

"I may well call it a fairy Mouse, for it was so very diminutive that it could make its way with ease between the wires of any common Mouse-cage, and, when our governess procured some fine brass wire and twisted it in and out between the larger wires till they looked almost like a hurdle, and you would have thought it impossible that any Mouse, however small, could pass through, our little fairy very soon made her way out again! I do not think that I have ever seen a more beautiful little creature than that Mouse. Its back was of bright brownish-red, the colour of the Dormouse, and its breast and stomach were pure white; its little black eyes, when they caught the light, were as bright as stars, and all its motions were full of grace. When sitting up, as we sometimes saw it, upon its tiny hind paws, holding a grain of wheat, or perhaps washing its face with its still tinier fore paws, it was truly an enchanting object! There was another of our Mouse pets whom I must not forget to mention (though he was only a specimen of the Common House-Mouse), because his history was really a very curious one, and because, also, he was my favourite of them all.

"One day I met the housemaid holding up by its tail a poor little tiny new-born Mouse, towards whom, of course, my affections were immediately drawn, and whose feeble squeaking went to my heart. This girl was entirely without pity for the Mouse. She laughed as she held up the poor little helpless creature, which she was about to throw to the cat, and evidently expected that I should think it as good a



HARVEST MICE.

joke as she did herself, to hear it 'squeal,' as she expressed it. In a moment, with trembling hands, I got the mouse from her, and ran with it to my kind governess, who looked at it compassionately, and immediately proceeded to tie a very small bit of sponge to the top of a paint-brush stick, which she dipped in milk, and endeavoured to make the poor little Mouse suck it, but all in vain. She still held the Mouse, however, in the palm of her hand, where she had covered it up warmly with a piece of flannel, and while she was trying to convince me of the impossibility of bringing up a little blind mouse that could not even feed itself, she suddenly received the oddest sensation, as if some very, very diminutive tongue were licking some of the milk with which her fingers had been moistened, and exclaimed in astonishment, 'I declare the little Mouse is licking my hand!' And so he was, and so he actually continued to do, as from time to time she took him out of the nest which was now made for him and covered him up, in her moistened fingers; and so he was fed, by licking milk from the palm of a hand, till he became strong enough to stand upon his legs and to lap it from a doll's saucer, and till his little sparkling eyes opened and he became a fine thriving Mouse. I shall never forget our extreme delight when Nelson, as we ridiculously called him, was able to run about the tea-tray in the school-room, and take a crumb of bread from each of us in turn, sitting up upon his hind legs, like our grown-up mice, and holding it in his paws, to nibble at leisure.

"When these pretty little creatures multiply too fast, so that they get into our cupboards and make holes in our cakes, cheese, or other articles of food, we are obliged to treat them as mischievous trespassers; but the mere presence of a cat, especially, of course, if a good mouser, is enough to keep any small house clear of them, and it is only indolence in the inhabitants that can ever occasion their becoming the pest that we sometimes find them. For myself, if I see a solitary Mouse by chance appear in a dwelling generally free from such intruders, stealing along in the shadow of the dining-room table in the hope of picking up some crumb of biscuit or of bread, the remembrance of my early favourite rises to my mind; I think how graceful all his actions were, and what bright eyes and beautiful little paws he had, and I secretly wish that his cousin under the table may at least have a happy life, whether it be a long or a short one, asking myself, in the words of the old nursery rhyme, 'What harm in a little brown Mouse?'

"Nelson was my favourite of all our pet Mice, and I think he was much the cleverest and the most amusing; and, if I were a poor prisoner shut up in a solitary dungeon, as some have been, till they have been thankful to make pets even of rats or toads or spiders, I should never have wished for a more engaging dumb companion than a common House-Mouse."

Before leaving the Mice, I cannot resist telling you another story of Mr. Ralston's,

as nearly as I can remember it (I only heard him tell it once), which we will call the "Mouse-maiden," as I do not know its proper name. The moral of it I shall leave you to find out for yourselves.

Once upon a time there lived a man who was so exceedingly good and saint-like in his life, that at last he acquired the power of working miracles. One day he chanced to observe a little Mouse creeping about the floor, and the idea occurred to him that as he had no child of his own, it would be very nice to change the tiny creature into a little girl. No sooner thought than done; and a most beautiful little maiden appeared in place of the Mouse. The good man took every care of her, and she grew up in the course of time into a charming young lady. Her foster-father thought she was the most beautiful and the cleverest girl in the world, and when she was old enough to be married he was sorely troubled in his mind, for he thought there was no husband in the world good enough for her! At last a bright idea occurred to him, and a very grand one,—he would marry her to the sun himself! He was highly pleased at the idea of such a glorious alliance as this would be; but when he told the young lady his plan, she did not take the same view.

"What!" she cried, "marry me to that great hot scorching thing? No, thank you!"

So the saint went away rather crestfallen and much perturbed, for how could he find another husband as grand as the sun? But as he gazed up regretfully into the sky, a cloud passed over the face of the sun, and then he thought—

"A cloud must be even greater than the sun himself, for it can obscure his face. I will marry her to the cloud!"

But when he told his ward his new idea, she said, "Oh, dear no, thank you! A cloud, indeed,—nasty damp thing! I shouldn't like it at all!"

So then the poor man was more puzzled than ever; but at last he bethought him that the wind must be even more powerful than the cloud, because he can blow the clouds away, and drive them before him through the sky; so he proposed the wind for the young lady's husband. But she wouldn't hear of him either: she said he was rough and boisterous, and not at all the companion she should like. The saint was in despair; but at last it occurred to him that the mountain was even mightier than the wind, for could it not stand for ever and ever unmoved by the fiercest blasts? Now he thought his ward must be satisfied with his choice; but she cried,

"What! a mountain!—dull, monotonous things! Always exactly the same from morning till night! That would be a dreary marriage! No, indeed, thank you; no mountain for me!"

After this the poor man was quite hopeless. It was no use for him to try to find a husband for his Mouse-maiden; he could never please her. What could he do?

At length it came into his mind that perhaps the best way would be to see if she had any choice of her own. So he went to her and suggested the idea that she might possibly be able to think of a suitable husband for herself.

"Why, that's the most sensible thing you've said yet," she cried; "and now that you mention it, I have an idea who I should like to marry."

The saint was most anxious to know what her choice would be, and wondered to himself where she would find a finer husband than those he had chosen. At last the Mouse-maiden said, hanging her head a little, "I think I should like to marry a *Mouse!*"

The surprise of the saint knew no bounds; but as she was a very determined young lady, and as the marriage seemed to him very unequal under existing circumstances, he thought on mature deliberation that the best plan would be to change her back again into a mouse!

THE SWINE-HOUSE.

THE word "Swine-house" naturally makes one think of an extensive pig-stye; but the creatures that occupy this place in the Regent's Park Gardens are very different from the sleek, peaceful animals which our farmers feed up for pork or bacon. The Wild Swine of the Old World is a fierce and often dangerous animal: even the sows can be very savage when they have a litter of young; and an old Wild Boar, with his bristly back and long white tusks, is really a terrible fellow. A boar-hunt makes a fine scene for a picture, but I think we may be glad that the Wild Boar has disappeared from England since the days of Charles I. There are still boar hunts in France and Germany, but they are attended with more noise and show than real danger. It is more common now in the German forests to drive the Wild Boars within range of sportsmen, who kill them with the rifle, than to hunt them on horseback with dogs and spears.

It is related in the life of the late Prince Consort how, on one occasion, he showed his great skill as a marksman by shooting several fine specimens in succession. British India is the place where Boar-hunting can be seen in perfection; it is like an English Fox-hunt, in the finished "get-up" of the sportsmen, the beauty of the noble horses ridden, and the headlong speed at which the chase is pursued. But instead of the various fences, which an English hunter is trained to leap over so nimbly, the wide plains of India, over which the Boar is pursued, are intersected by *nullahs*, deep yawning cracks in the parched ground, often too wide for the best-mounted rider to clear, and too steep for him to scramble through without great risk. The

great excitement of these hunts lies in the struggle for "first spear." The Boar is pressed till his speed flags, and then begins a rapid race among the foremost horsemen to overtake him and inflict the first wound—no matter how slight, provided it be sufficient to draw blood. Something like this, no doubt, is seen in an English hunting-field, when every one tries hard to be first in at the death of the Fox. But when the Boar has once been wounded, there is a new source of excitement, unknown in our English sport. The savage animal will often turn and charge his pursuers, inflicting with his sharp tusks severe and even fatal injuries on the horses, and sometimes, though rarely, wounding the riders.

There are no Wild Boars in America, but there are some small animals of the

THE WILD BOAR.

same family, and nearly the same habits, called Peccaries. One species, the Collared Peccary, you will see in the Swine-house. Herds of these creatures range in the forests of Central and Southern America. Small as they are, they are very fierce, and if an unwary sportsman shoots one of their number, they are very likely, instead of running away, to surround and attack him, in which case his best chance of safety will be to climb a tree. He cannot hope to outrun such nimble creatures, and their little tusks are very sharp. They have one peculiarity in common with other Wild Swine—a deadly hatred for snakes, which they attack, kill and eat, in fierce and fearless style. When a Peccary sees a venomous serpent, his little body seems to bristle all over, and his small piggy eyes flash with anger. He attacks the reptile by leaping into the air and alighting on him with his keen-cutting hoofs. I have been told that the droves of domestic Swine in North America often destroy rattle-

snakes in the same manner, and eat them greedily when dead, yet nobody ever heard of a Swine being killed by the bite of a snake. It appears that the poison, which is so fatal to other animals, has no effect on those of this particular family.

There are no species of Swine native to Australia. Great numbers, however, have been introduced by the English settlers, and some of these have got loose in the unfrequented parts of the country and become quite wild. Here is a letter about them from a gentleman who has travelled many thousand miles through Australian bush.

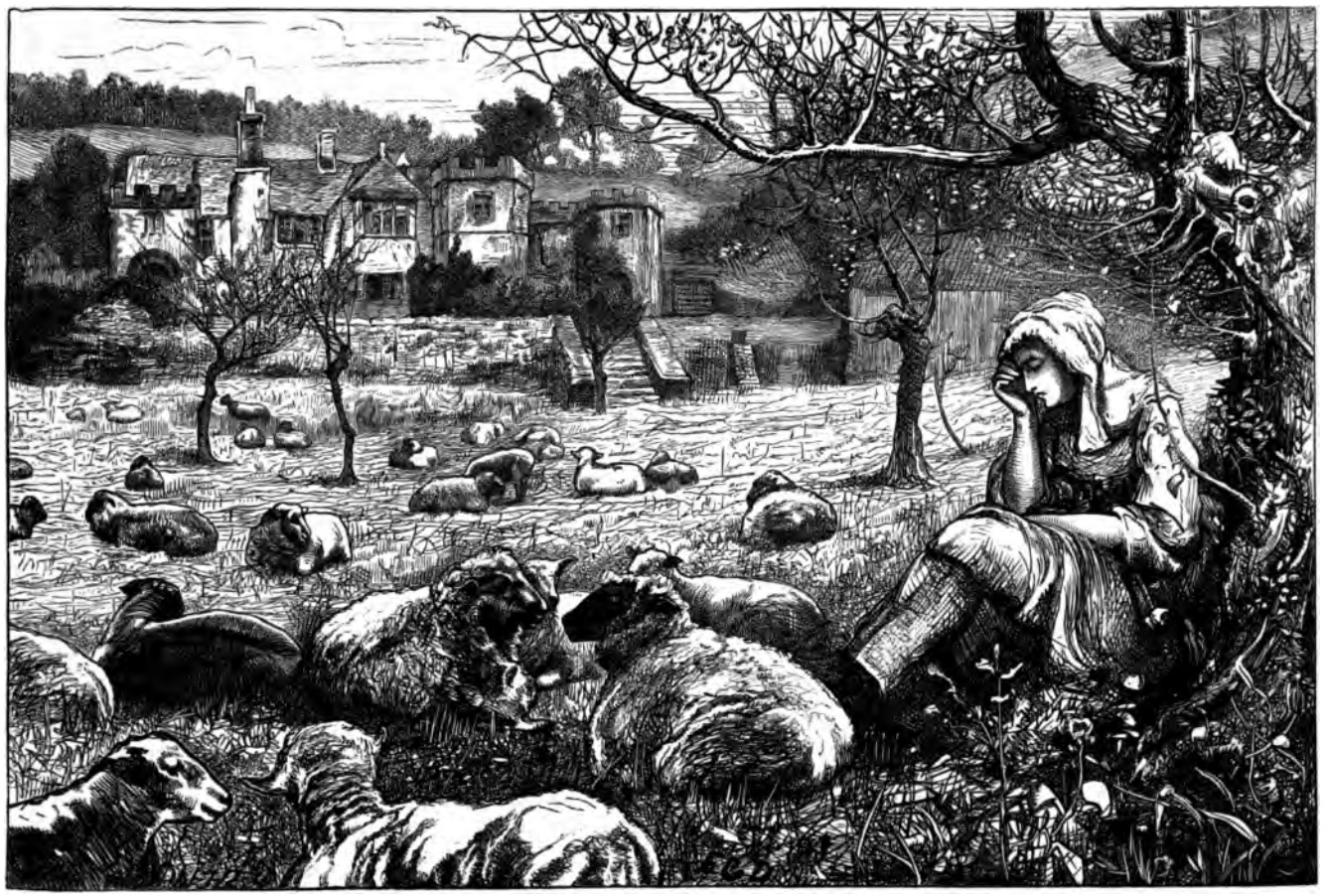
"You ask me if I know anything of the Wild Pigs on the Clarence. Very little,

I am sorry to say. Our friend Captain S., who is an old Indian hog-hunter, told me that they had given him some good runs, and he thought in a few years they would have all the character of the true wild breed. But I never had to do with hunting more than one, and that was a very, very little black Pig. As I crossed a wild part of New England, we came on this Pigling, astray from his family, and the black fellow who guided our party called out, 'Hi! Mas'r, you shoot! *budgerry patter*' (*i.e.*, capital eating) 'that fellow!' 'No, Daddy,' said I, 'you must catch him yourself.' *And he did.* But such a chase I never saw. The black was a capital runner, but Piggy, though slower, was very active, and turned and doubled so quick that it was impossible to lay hold of him. He even dodged among our horses,

while we sat laughing till we cried, and Daddy got hot and angry: the 'aborigines,' you know, cannot bear to be laughed at. But his blood was up, and he would not be beaten: he gave up snatching at Piggy, and fairly ran him down, till he could at last throw himself on him. We let the little grunter go, having ransomed him with a sixpence and a fig of tobacco; but Daddy was very sulky all day. And that was the first and last I saw of Wild Pigs in Australia!"

THE SHEEP-SHEDS.

SHEEP—that is, common domestic Sheep—are certainly dull and uninteresting animals, but this is partly because we do not usually see them to advantage. Sheep are naturally mountainous animals; if left to themselves they always prefer hills and rocky mountains to plains and low-lying pasture, and are as active in climbing as goats. The Sheep of the Welsh mountains are a much more sprightly race than our fat English flocks. At the period of sacred history Sheep were evidently not considered stupid. It was the custom to give each individual a name, to which each would answer when called. This custom still exists in Greece, and, I believe, in some other countries. A missionary tells us that once when he was travelling in Greece, in passing by a flock of Sheep he begged the shepherd to call one of them by name; he did so, and immediately the Sheep left its companions and its pasture and ran up to the hand of the shepherd with evident signs of pleasure. The shepherd told the missionary that many of the Sheep were still *wild*, that they had not yet learned their names, but that by teaching all would learn them. Those which knew their names and would answer to them he called *tame*. Some years ago pet Lambs used to be quite a fashion, and there have been many poems and stories written about them. The poet Wordsworth wrote a very pretty account of a pet Lamb and a mountain maiden; and all children ought to read Miss Edgeworth's story of "Simple Susan" and her Lamb. Queen Victoria, when she was a little girl and lived at Kensington Palace, had a pet Lamb with a pink ribbon round its neck. Some children I know had one which was very tame and affectionate. When it grew up it was too rough and big for a playfellow, and was sent to join a flock of Sheep; but long afterwards, when the children came past, it would leave the others to run to them. Once when I was walking through a field full of Sheep, a Lamb that had strayed from its mother insisted on following me home; at last I had to cross a ditch, and in jumping after me the poor little thing fell in and was nearly drowned; however, we fished it out, and took it to the kitchen fire to dry, and it



DOMESTIC SHEEP.

was none the worse. When little Lambs are born early in a very cold spring, the mothers often die, and the farmers bring up numbers in their warm kitchens, feeding them from a bottle, and they always become much attached to their two-legged nurses. In Suffolk and, I believe, in other counties, these are called "Cosset Lambs."

There is only one kind of wild Sheep in Europe, the Moufflon, which is found in Corsica and Sardinia, from which many naturalists believe our domestic Sheep originally sprung. There seems no doubt that the original colour of the Sheep was dark brown, and that the change from this colour to white must have been the work of careful breeding. Many writers attribute this improvement to Jacob. Certainly white flocks were common at a very early date. In America there are two kinds of wild Sheep, the Rocky-Mountain Argali and the Californian Argali: the *Aoudad*, of which we find fine specimens in the Gardens, looks more like a Goat than a Sheep. He has, however, no beard, only a hanging mane of long coarse hair, beginning under the lower jaw and running along the under-side of the neck and chest. The fore legs above the knee are also covered with long hair, like ruffles, on which account the French call him "*Moufflon à manchettes*." He is found in the Atlas Mountains, and is a splendid climber, living among the most precipitous heights and leaping immense distances from rock to rock. Sheep feed chiefly on different kinds of grasses, eating the tender parts and leaving the stalks. They are particularly fond of the silvery hair-grass, the dog's-tail grass, and the fine bent-grass. They will sometimes eat the young shoots of the heath and furze, and the green leaves of the elm, ash, willow, holly, and beech. They nibble off the prickles of the furze very quickly, one by one, so as not to be hurt by them. Shakespeare speaks of their "browsing on ivy." Salt in different forms is very good for their constitutions. In some parts of South America salt is very scarce, and when the Sheep and Cattle discover a pit of clay salt, they rush to it with such eagerness that many of them are crushed to death in the struggle to obtain it. You may remember in Miss Wetherell's delightful story of the "Wide, Wide World," the pretty description of the American farmer, Mr. Van Brunt, summoning the sheep from far and near with his cry, "Ca-nan-nan-nan!" to be fed with the salt he sprinkled over the stones for them, and their eagerness in licking it up. Sheep are very much attached to one another, and will not, like many other animals, desert each other when ill or suffering. I have heard of one in the Regent's Park who had a very bad foot, and could hardly manage to crawl along; a friend always remained near this poor creature, evidently sympathizing in its suffering and difficulty in getting about. When a Sheep, from any accident, rolls over on the broad part of its back, it has the utmost difficulty in getting up again. While they are lying in this helpless condition, ravens will

sometimes take advantage of it to settle on them and pluck out their eyes. I read a pretty story not long ago, of a kind-hearted Ox, who, finding a Sheep in this predicament, went up to it and deliberately turned it over on its side with his horns, and thus saved it from the attacks of the cruel birds.

In England we make use of the Sheep only for food and for its wool, but in many foreign countries they milk the ewes like Goats. The quality in the Sheep's wool which makes it so very valuable for clothing is called *felting;* it consists in the close attachment of the hairs together produced by the scaly surface of each individual

MOUNTAIN SHEEP.

hair. If you examine the wool of a Sheep closely, you will see that there are two kinds of hair in it,—one long, and growing in one direction, and an under-coat of soft and curly hairs. This is the case, to a certain extent, with many furred animals, but in the Sheep the under-growth is much more developed than with others. The skin of the Sheep is used for leather, which is employed in making gloves, and an inferior kind of binding for books. There is a great variety of English breeds of Sheep: the Southdown, which are small and make excellent mutton; the Black-Faced and Horned Sheep of Westmoreland and the North of England; the Cheviot breed; the Dorset, and others. There are immense numbers of sheep in Australia. It is

from that country that England draws her chief supplies of the wool which she uses for her manufactures.

The Macarthur family, who early in the present century introduced the fine-woolled Merino Sheep into New South Wales, did the most valuable service to our Southern settlements. There are, I believe, at present in all the Australasian colonies, including New Zealand, nearly fifty millions of Sheep, or something like twenty for every man, woman, and child living there. Some of the flocks are quite enormous. One family of four brothers in Victoria were lately said to be shearing a million of Sheep yearly. Of course such multitudes of Sheep require an immense extent of pasture. When a return was made to the Sydney Government some sixteen years ago of the extent of land leased by the different flock-owners—squatters, as they are called in Australia—one gentleman was returned as holding more than a million acres. These large numbers are very puzzling: what would you think of a single enclosed paddock containing sixteen square miles? Formerly the flocks in Australia were managed by shepherds, each having charge of one or two thousand sheep, which they used to drive to pasture early in the morning, and back to a large fold at night. But the Sheep have been found to thrive much better since the runs have been fenced in, and they have been allowed to feed as they please, so long as there is grass for them. Boundary-riders, as they are called, go frequently on horseback round the enclosed paddocks to see that the fences are all right, and that there are no signs of the *Warrigal*, or native dog, a very destructive wild animal, which is happily becoming scarce. In years of drought, which in that climate are not uncommon, great numbers of Sheep die or have to be boiled down for their tallow. The larger squatters often hold reserved pastures on the hills, to which they shift their flocks when the plains are burnt up. But Australian Sheep, if undisturbed, will keep their health on the scantiest pasture. Flocks may be seen in very fair condition on ground which to an English eye seems as bare as a turnpike road. I believe this is owing to many oft he grasses having bulbous roots, which the Sheep scrape up with their teeth.

The extensive system of fencing of which I have spoken was at first very inconvenient to Her Majesty's mails on the cross-country roads. A driver with two, or perhaps four, half-broken horses, and no one to help him, found it very troublesome especially at night, to alight from his box to open and shut a paddock gate; and cases occurred when the horses rushed away at full speed with the mail-coach, leaving the poor driver utterly helpless and bewildered. Some one, however, who had observed the habits of Sheep, found out that these animals were too cautious to go beyond the line of fence, unless they could see a clear opening. Thus, instead of gates, it was found sufficient to make winding passages (I think they call them

blinds) leading from the outside into the paddock. These are hedged on both sides with brushwood, and as the Sheep cannot see through them, they never dare to enter, and the mail-man drives through zigzag-fashion without any hindrance.

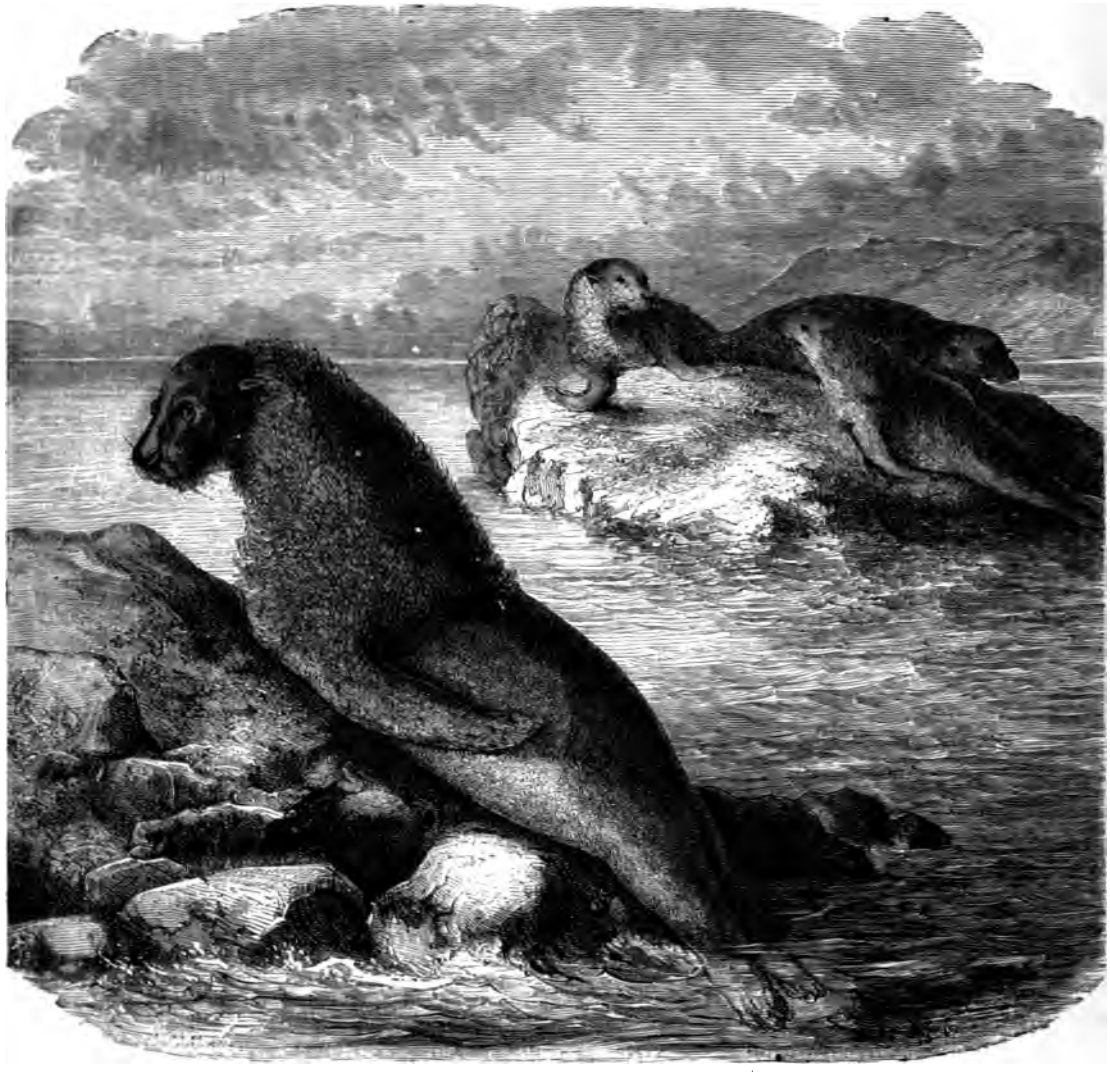
THE SEAL-POND.

LITTLE people have a habit of fancying that whales, porpoises, and all sorts of great creatures that swim in the sea are fish; but fish are cold-blooded creatures, and there are many animals living in the sea which, like the whale, are warm-blooded, and suckle their young as cows or sheep do. Among the most amusing and easily tamed of these "Cetaceans," as learned folks call them, are the Seals. In their wild state they live upon fish, which their extraordinary swiftness in the water enables them to catch with great ease. They are very shy, and on those parts of the British coasts where they are still found it is very difficult to get near them; but in Seal Island, on the Australian coast, they may be seen literally by hundreds lying heaped one upon another. A traveller told me that when the captain of the steamer in which he was ran near the island and sounded the steam-whistle, to see them tumbling one over another down to the water was very comical. But these were Sea-Bears, a very big sort of Seal. The tame ones at our Zoological Gardens are the Common Seal, or Sea-Calf. They are playful, affectionate creatures, not more than four or five feet long. They have learnt to answer to their own names, and will do just what the keeper bids them. They come to be fed in turn as they are called, sometimes kissing the keeper and caressing him with their long flippers as if they were hands. They swim faster and dive more cleverly than any one can conceive who has not seen them.

There is a large kind of Seal called a Sea-Lion, of which there is a most amusing pair at the Brighton Aquarium, who seem to understand everything their keeper says to them. They come floundering down the rocks when he calls them, and take plunges into the water at his orders, catching the fish he throws them most cleverly. I watched this funny old couple playing together for a long time. The game was that the husband had to keep in one part of the tank, and the wife swam rapidly round and round, and whenever she reached him she either jumped over his back or dived underneath him. At last he seemed to get tired of his share of the amusement, which was certainly rather dull. They have an only son and heir, who has a tank all to himself. He is much more sedate than his parents. A Seal which was brought to the Zoological Gardens some years ago was so unhappy when first

captured that it refused food, and they had to keep it alive by forcing fish down its throat; but after a time it became quite reconciled, and as tame as possible.

Perhaps you have heard of the wonderful performing Seal "Toby" at the Westminster Aquarium. He used to make a plunge of nine feet into the water



THEIR NATIVE HAUNTS.

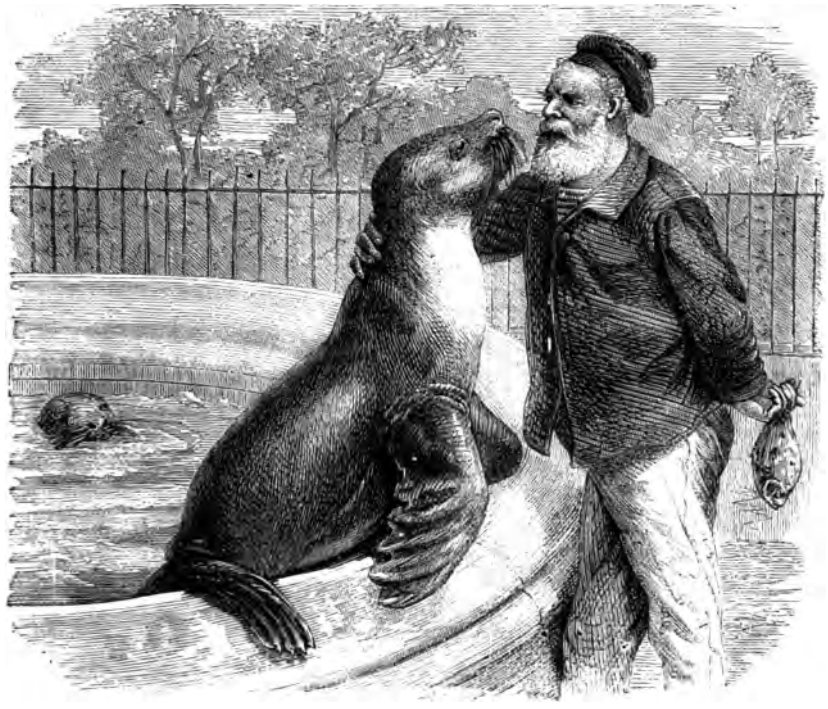
when his keeper told him. He did not much like it, however, and would stand hesitating for some minutes before he could make up his mind to the dive, while his keeper encouraged him. It was funny to see the other Seals forming a semicircle round in the water below to watch the proceedings, as interested and excited about the feat of their brother Seal as human beings could be. There was another

famous Seal which used to be called the "Talking Fish," which was supposed to say "papa" and "mamma," but I can't say that he said the words very distinctly. Seals are very fond of music, and the sound of a flute or a violin will bring them to the top of the water in shoals to listen. They are found in abundance in the Northern seas, and are invaluable to the Greenlanders, who make use of them in a variety of ways. Their flesh serves them for food of the most nourishing description. With the fat they make oil, which they use both for light and firing. They could not burn wood even if they could get it, as they have no kind of fireplaces. They also use the oil to eat with their dried fish, and finally they exchange it with traders for all sorts of things. They can sew better with fibres of the Seal's sinews than with thread or silk, and make window-curtains, oil-flasks, and other things with the coats of the stomach. Part of the bladder they use to float their harpoons. Of the skins of the Seals they stand in the utmost need, for garments of varous kinds, and also for bags in which they sleep two or three together, which they call being "in Tuctoo."

Then they cover with seal-skin both their large and small boats, in which they travel to seek their provisions. They also cut out of them their thongs and straps and cover their tents with them, without which they could not live in summer. Some kinds of Seals have very fine beautiful coats, which are often used for ladies' muffs and jackets. The Seal is an excellent mother, and shows the greatest grief when her little ones are killed or taken from her. Seals have faces something between a dog and cat, and a mild, very human look in their eyes. It is thought by some people that their round heads and fin-like fore feet, and the shape of their fin-like hind feet, so like a fish's tail, gave rise to the old superstition of mermaids. The quantity of fish eaten by the Seal must be enormous, to judge by the amount it is found necessary to provide for them in the Gardens. An allowance of 14 cwt. during the year is no more than necessary to keep them in health. If sufficiently fed, they will live a long time in confinement. One old fellow called "Tom" lived many years in the Gardens, and died at last from swallowing a quantity of fish-hooks which had been left by mistake in the whitings on which he was fed.

The Seal is a very social animal; they bask together by hundreds on the rocks, and if an enemy appears, all plunge together instantly into the water. They can remain for several minutes under water, but not, like fish, for any length of time, and a Seal may be drowned like any land animal. In fine weather they usually employ their time in fishing, and generally come on shore in tempests and storms, in which, unlike most other creatures, they seem to take delight; instead of taking refuge in sheltered nooks among the rocks, they sport along the shore with apparent delight in the rough weather. Seals are perhaps the only animals which migrate like birds from

one part of the world to another. On the northern coasts of Greenland they are seen to retire in July, and to return again in September. It is then supposed that they go in search of food; but they make a second departure in March, and return in June with numbers of young ones. When they go upon this expedition they are seen in great droves for many days together, taking that part of the sea most free from ice, and going still forward into those seas where man cannot follow. In what manner they return or by what passage is unknown, but it is observed that when they set out on this expedition they are very fat, but that they come home



excessively lean. Seals have either one or two young ones at a time, and in a single day the cubs become strong and lively enough to play about and wrestle with one another. It is said that the Elephant Seals of the Southern Hemisphere form a line between their wives and the sea when they are nursing their young among the rocks, to prevent them leaving them for a moment, and that the poor mothers become nearly starved during the time. A Seal, to be properly tamed and trained, must be taken quite young. A gentleman in Scotland once tamed one so completely that it followed him like a dog. He used to take it on fishing excursions with him, and if thrown from the boat it would struggle back again as fast as possible, preferring the company of its master even to the delights of its native element. There is a very

sad story about an Irish gentleman and a tame Seal. It happened that there were two bad harvests one after the other where he lived, and the foolish and ignorant people about fancied that this Seal was the cause. They made such a fuss about it that the gentleman at last consented that it should be taken away. It was taken in a boat out to sea and thrown in, but it soon returned, and after several trials of the same kind, one stormy night it arrived at its master's door so exhausted that it died there.

THE LION-HOUSE.

And now we come to perhaps the most interesting part of the Gardens. To see wild beasts in confinement is always rather a melancholy as well as an interesting sight. One cannot help thinking of their own deserts and jungles, and the free roving lives in hot climates natural to them, and contrasting them with their narrow quarters and the strong bolts and bars with which they are surrounded. If they must be confined, however, it would be difficult to make more comfortable arrangements for them than the present ones at the Zoological Gardens. The principal building they inhabit is two hundred and thirty feet long and seventy feet wide. There are fourteen dens ranged along the north side, each having two interior apartments or sleeping-places, and will contain fourteen pair of animals. The larger dens are about twenty feet long and twelve feet broad, and the smaller twelve feet square. At present there are about twenty-five inhabitants of the Lion-house, consisting of Lions, Tigers, Leopards, Jaguas, and Pumas.

All the most formidable beasts of prey—with the single exception, perhaps, of the Grizzly Bear—belong to the cat tribe, or, as learned folks call them by a Latin name, the *Felidæ*. When you are playing with pussy, or hearing her purr over her milk, you are in fact making a pet of the Tiger's first cousin and the Lion's humble relative. The distribution of these terrible creatures over the world is rather curious. In early times there were Lions in Europe; now there is only one of this family left in our quarter of the world; I mean the wild cat, a fierce and mischievous but by no means dangerous animal. A few of these are still left in the wildest parts of Scotland, but they have quite disappeared from England and Wales. In Asia the larger kinds of Felidæ—Lions, Tigers, Panthers, and Leopards—are still very numerous and destructive. In British India thousands of cattle and great numbers of human beings are yearly killed by them, and the Government pay liberal rewards for their destruction. At the small English settlement of Singapore, on an island south of the Malay Peninsula, it was reckoned a few years ago that one

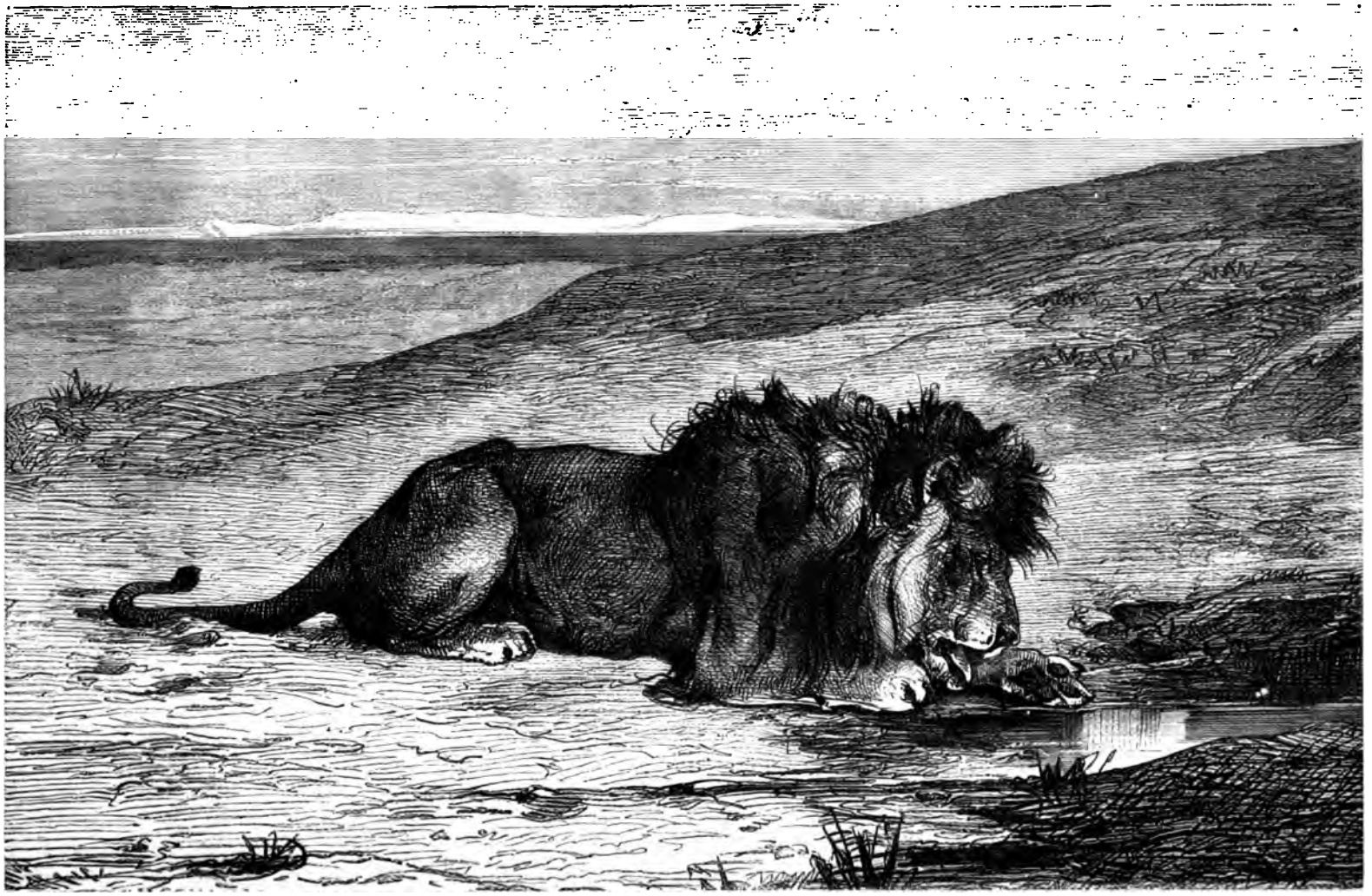
DOMESTIC FELICITY.

of the native population was destroyed by a Tiger for every day in the year. These Tigers swim across the narrow straits from the mainland, so as to make their attacks without any warning. In Southern and Central Africa Lions are very numerous, and make sad havoc among the settlers' cattle. There are also Panthers (very powerful and dangerous animals) and Leopards, but no Tigers. In America they have none of the Asiatic or African species, but in place of the Lion they have the Puma, which has no mane, and looks like a small dark-coloured Lioness; and instead of Tiger or Panther, the Jaguar.

The Lion is called the king of beasts, so we will turn our attention first to him. He may be known from his wild-beast cousins by the tufts of hair at the end of his tail, and by his long flowing mane. His true country is Africa; there on the vast plains of burning sands he may be seen in his greatest glory. He is fiercer, stronger, and more terrible than the Asiatic Lion. Lions who inhabit countries where man has fixed his habitation, and have become acquainted with his power, soon lose a portion of their courage, and seldom attack anything but flocks and herds, which even women and children are sufficient to protect.

In the desert the habit of conquering every creature they meet, and their ignorance of firearms and other weapons used by men, make them most terrible to encounter. They boldly face armed men, and wounds seem to enrage more than daunt them. The Lion is not really a cruel animal; except in self-defence he only kills what he requires to eat, and when satisfied becomes quite gentle. When hungry, he boldly attacks any animal that comes in his way; but as all animals are afraid of him, they all naturally avoid his haunts, so that he is often obliged to hide in order to take them by surprise. He crouches down in some thicket or among the long grass, and waits patiently till his prey comes within a proper distance, then he springs after it fifteen or twenty feet from him, and often seizes it at the first bound. In the deserts and forests his usual prey are the gazelles and monkeys. The latter he has to catch when they happen to be on the ground, for, luckily for them, he cannot climb trees like a cat or a tiger. He eats enough at a time to last him for two or three days; he is able to live a long time without food, but thirst he cannot endure. His temperature is naturally very hot, and it has been said that he is in a continual fever. Whenever he meets with water, he drinks, lapping it slowly like a cat.

The roaring of a Lion is so loud that when it is heard in the night, and re-echoed through the hills, it sounds like distant thunder. This roar is his natural note, but when angry he makes a different sort of growl—short, broken, and repeated. The roar is a deep hollow growl, which he makes five or six times in the day, and always before rain. The cry of rage is much louder and most terrible. When he makes this sound, he lashes his sides with his long tail, his mane seems to rise and stand like



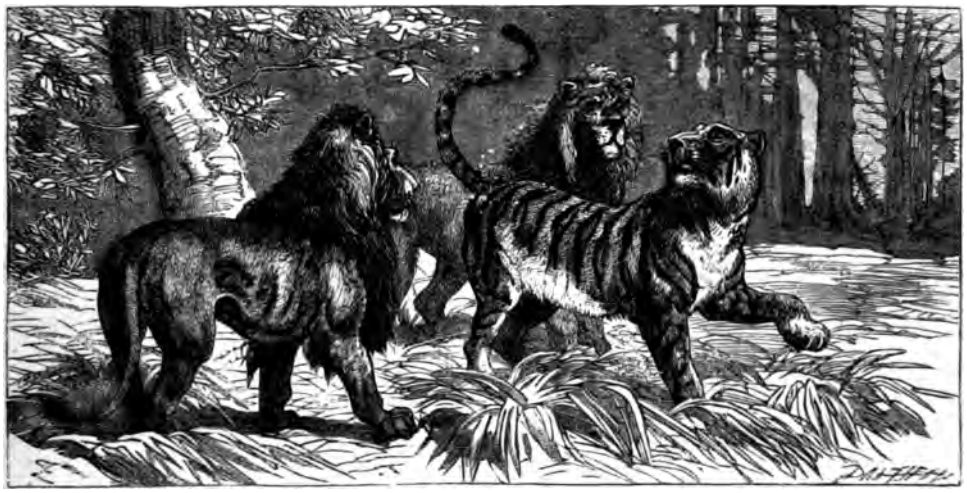
THE DESERT KING.

bristles round his head, he shows his formidable teeth and his tongue, and extends his claws, which seem as long as a man's fingers. When prepared for fight in this way, there are few animals who would venture to engage in a conflict. The elephant, the rhinoceros, the tiger, and the hippopotamus, are the only animals that are not afraid to fight him singly. Sometimes, however, the leopard and the wild boar, though they would never seek the attack, are provoked to a combat, and are occasionally victorious, but these instances are very rare. Man is the only creature which attacks him with almost certain success, with the assistance of dogs and horses trained to hunt him. When the hunters approach him, they either shoot or throw their javelins, and in this manner disable him before he is attacked by the dogs, which he would otherwise make short work of. He is also taken by pitfalls. The natives dig a deep hole in the ground, and cover it lightly with sticks and earth, which give way beneath his weight, and he sinks to the bottom, with no means of escape. The usual manner of taking Lions, however, is while they are cubs and incapable of resistance. The place near the den of a Lioness is generally well known on account of her eager and savage hunting for food when she has young ones; the natives therefore watch the time of her absence, and carry off her cubs. The Lioness is a most affectionate mother, and will go through fire and water for her young ones. There was a tame Lioness once who formed a friendship with a little dog. When this dog had puppies, to the surprise of every one, she became a second mother to them, and caressed and fondled them as if they had been her own cubs!

The ancients had a saying that "as the peacock is the most beautiful among birds, so is the Tiger among quadrupeds," and he is certainly a handsome and graceful animal: even here in confinement one cannot help admiring the bright yellow colour of his coat, crossed by the shining black stripes, and the grace of his movements, but in his native jungle he is a much finer animal. Tigers are only found in Asia, there are none in Africa. They prowl about near marshes, where they can steal on their prey through the long jungle-grass. They feed chiefly on deer, but, when near a village, kill many domestic animals. When a Tiger has once killed a man, he does not care for any other sort of food, although it does not agree with him at all, for he soon grows unhealthy and loses his beautiful glossy coat when he takes to this mode of life. This shows how very difficult it is to cure a bad habit once formed, and how the things we like best are not always best for us, and other things which it is rather tiresome to be told, but are none the less true for all that. A famous English sportsman shot one of these man-eaters which had destroyed more than a hundred natives; had he contented himself with deer, the natural food provided for him, who knows but he might have been frisking among the long grass still? For Tigers, like

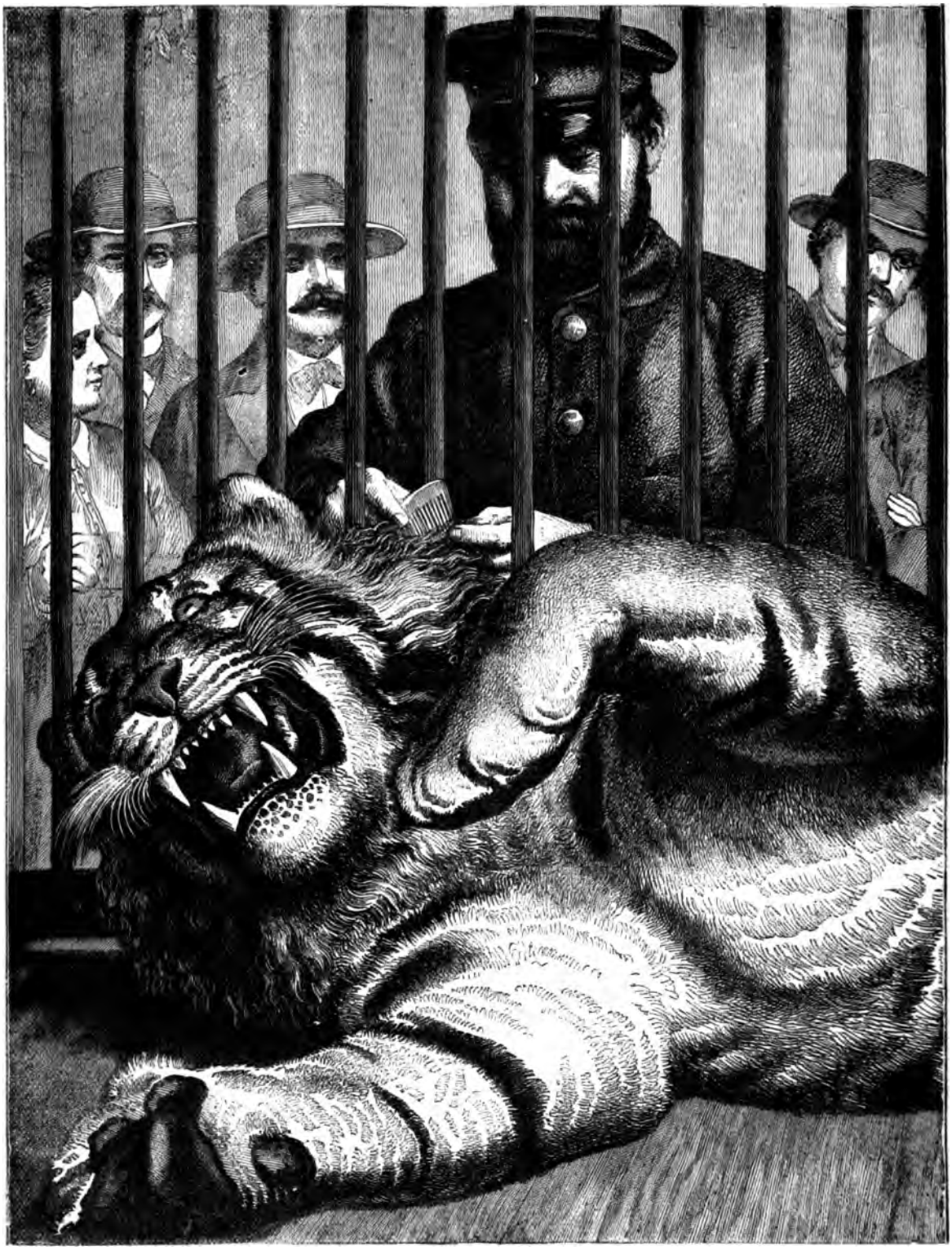
THE STRANGE NURSE.

Lions, are very long-lived animals. The Tiger is like the Lion in courage and strength, but, unlike him, is cruel and treacherous, and kills not only to eat, but from savage pleasure in slaughter. When he falls in with a flock, he levels all with indiscriminate cruelty, and scarcely finds time to satisfy his appetite, so eager is he to destroy all life that comes within his reach; this makes him a much more unpleasant neighbour than the Lion. The strength and rapidity of a Tiger's movements are so great that, during the march of an army, one has been known to seize a soldier off his horse and carry him away to the jungle without the least chance for his rescue. The Tiger is very rarely tamed, but when taken very young he sometimes becomes very fond of his keeper, and is delighted to have his whiskers combed out and his hair brushed, just as a cat likes to have her head stroked and to be gently scratched under



the chin. Indeed, one cannot watch the ways and attitudes of a Tiger without being constantly reminded of pussy: he will even make a sort of purring noise when he is pleased. Brown, in his "Sketches of Quadrupeds," tells us of a Tiger, who was brought from China when he was ten months old, who was so tame that the crew might take any liberties they pleased with him; he was as playful and harmless as a kitten. He frequently slept in the sailors' hammocks, and when stretched on deck, would allow two or three of them to repose with their heads resting on him for a pillow. He would frequently run out on the bowsprit, and climb about the ship like a cat with surprising agility. Little Tigers are nice playful little creatures. A pair of young ones, who had lost their mother, were once given to a pointer whose puppies had died, and she nursed the little striped creatures quite contentedly, and made them a capital mother.

I daresay you have read many interesting stories of adventures with Lions and



WITH THE TIGERS.

Tigers: of Androcles and his grateful Lion, of the young lady who frightened a Tiger away by unfurling a parasol in its face, and of the little trumpeter who, as the Tiger was carrying him off by his belt, blew such a blast in his ear that he dropped his prey and fled for the jungle. Our later sportsmen and travellers supply many similar tales. The good and brave missionary, Dr. Livingstone, had a hair's-breadth escape in Africa from a Lion, who dashed him to the ground and stood over him. The same thing happened to Lieutenant Wodehouse, whose companions actually shot the Lion so that it fell dead upon him. Knowing that he would be in danger from their bullets if fired from the side whence they first approached, he had the presence of mind to call to them in a loud whisper, "The other side." The Lion could of course have killed him in a moment, but was playing with him as a cat does with a mouse. Hardly a less wonderful escape was that of a clergyman at Singapore. He was walking in his garden, when a huge Tiger bounded out of the adjoining jungle and made straight at him. Providentially he had in his hand a gun loaded with small shot to keep birds from his fruit. By a sudden impulse rather than from any set purpose, he fired both barrels full into the animal's face, and the Tiger rushed away with a wild cry. Some days after, the beast was found dead in a thicket near the spot, with the skin of its face and neck literally torn to ribbons by its own claws. The small shot had blinded both eyes and inflicted a hundred smarting wounds. One cannot help pitying a creature that died in such agonies.

The sportsmen who hunt Tigers are often mounted on elephants, whose great height and strength renders the rider in the howdah pretty secure. The elephant, however, must be thoroughly trained to the business, for if he should take fright at sight of the Tiger and rush away through the jungle, the sportsman will be in a dangerous plight; but a first-rate shooting elephant will face his enemy, and has even been known to receive the Tiger on his tusks or crush him under his knees when wounded. But with all this, Tiger-hunting even on an elephant has its dangers. A relative of my own had a very narrow escape. A Tiger sprang up on the back of his elephant from behind, but before the creature could steady itself for a second spring, which must have proved fatal to him, he had just time to turn and fire down its very throat. Sometimes a safer method is adopted in India for killing a Tiger, Panther, or Leopard whose haunts are known. A sort of wooden platform is built at a secure height in a tree, and a small bullock is tethered in an open space within easy range. The savage beasts, intent on their prey, take no notice of the sportsman aiming down at them from his perch, and unless his aim quite fails him, have little chance of escape. Our English Lion-hunters in Africa resort to a bolder method for getting within shot of their enemy. They have a "skarm"—a sort of oblong trench like a shallow saw-pit—dug close to some spring or pool to which wild animals

come at night to drink, and in this they hide themselves towards dusk with quite a battery of rifles. Not Lions only, but elephants, rhinoceroses, and all sorts of big game are shot from these risky hiding-places, where the sportsman depends for his safety on the accuracy of his aim and his position below the dark outline of the surrounding ground. The danger is increased by the stealthy habits of the cat tribe, which approach the water with a footfall so silent that the most watchful ear can hardly detect it, while their forms as they skulk along the ground are but faintly seen in the brightest moonlight. It must require no common strength of nerve to use the rifle accurately from such an ambush. Mr. R. Gordon Cumming—dead since his African adventures—and our great explorer Sir Samuel Baker, have given us exciting stories of their experience in this night shooting. I think it is Mr. Gordon Cumming who relates that on one occasion there were no less than seven Lions prowling round the fountain where he was watching. He did not wish to fire, as he was waiting for elephants, which are valuable for the ivory of their tusks. But a wary Lioness detected his presence, and as she stole towards him with an idea of supper, he had to shoot her in self-defence.

The "Royal" Tiger, as he is justly named, is, however, a more formidable animal than even the so-called King of Beasts. With a blow of his paw he can crush the hard skull of a native like an egg-shell, and even beat in the forehead of an ox. He has been known to carry a bullock away over a high fence as a fox would leap a gate with a duck over his shoulder. To attack him without firearms would be a desperate undertaking. Two Englishmen, however—and I believe only two—the name of one I forget, but the other was Colonel Skinner, both famous as "shikarries" or hunters, have succeeded in spearing a Tiger on horseback. The circumstances under which the latter performed the feat were curious. A large Tiger had escaped from the menagerie of one of the native princes, and suddenly appeared on the parade-ground where the Colonel was exercising his men. Colonel Skinner called for his boar-spear, rode full speed at the animal as he would have done in hog-hunting, and as the Tiger crouched for a spring, leapt his horse over him, and struck him fairly through the spine.

Great as is the Tiger's strength, an old buffalo always proves a match for him. A well-known British writer on field sports actually witnessed a combat between these animals which ended in the Tiger's being gored and trampled to death, the buffalo, however, dying but a few minutes after through loss of blood from the deep gashes made by the Tiger's terrible claws. A buffalo, however, is an animal of prodigious weight and strength. The defeat of a Tiger by so humble an animal as a donkey would seem far stranger. Yet it is really a fact. A powerful native prince, Runjeet Singh, the "Old Lion of Lahore," as Anglo-Indians called him, had a

menagerie of wild animals which he kept to fight with each other, as cruel or thoughtless people formerly did game-cocks in England. Among these was a fine mouse-coloured donkey, who on more than one occasion beat off a Tiger who was let loose on him. He drew himself up in a corner of the courtyard so that he could only be approached from behind, and there stood with his hind legs somewhat bent, and his head thrown well back over his shoulder to watch the approach of his foe. When the Tiger made his spring, he gathered up his muscular limbs in a moment, and let fly both his heels full in the jaws of his enemy, who fell back baffled and stunned.

One kind of Leopard, the Cheetah, known from other species by a short bristly mane, is not only hunted but trained for hunting game. He is drawn on a low car to the ground where antelopes are expected to be found, and when as near them as he can approach without scaring the herd, is let loose by his keeper as we should slip a greyhound at a hare. For some distance he crawls along the ground towards the game, and when he thinks himself near enough, dashes upon them with a few prodigious bounds. He is generally successful in striking one down, but if he fails, makes no attempt to pursue them farther, and returns sulkily to his car.

The Jaguar, though small, is a very powerful animal, and of all the cat tribe the most savage and difficult to tame. Nearly forty years ago the Hull Zoological Society, having already a female Jaguar, purchased a male from Mr. Van Amburgh, of whose skill and courage in taming wild beasts I dare say you have heard. He was introduced to his intended mate by placing him in an adjoining cage. But instead of saying in Jaguar language, "How do you do, ma'am? I hope we shall like each other," he seized on her tail, which she had carelessly whisked through the bars, and mangled it so frightfully that she died of the injury. Amputation might possibly have saved her, but operating on a Jaguar is no joke. This was not all. The male Jaguar himself shortly afterwards died, and it was found that the "Lion-tamer," to guard himself against the animal's surly temper, had not only filed down his teeth to the stumps, but cut his claws so close that the paws mortified.

Australia, which has a peculiar set of creatures of its own, is very fortunate in having none of these big wild cats to prey on her millions of sheep and oxen. There is a poem which I used to be very fond of when I was a child, written by William Blake, who was a painter as well as a poet. I never see a Tiger now without thinking of it.

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
In the forest of the night,
In what distant deeps or skies?
Burnt the ardour of thine eyes

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand formed thy dread feet?
Did God smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

It is certainly a great mystery to us why this terrible and savage beast should have been created, but we may be sure that they have their own place and their own work to do in the wonderful scheme of nature.

THE ANTELOPE-HOUSE.

It is quite a relief to turn from the Lion-house with all its fierce inhabitants to the beautiful and graceful creatures we find here, close by. At the same time it must be confessed that Antelopes are rather dull animals to watch, and that one cannot look at them for very long at a time without getting tired. There are as many as eighty different kinds of Antelopes to be found in different parts of the world. In the Antelope-house we find specimens of many of the larger kinds. The biggest and most imposing-looking of these is the Eland from Africa. This creature was first brought to England by the late Earl of Derby in 1840. The English climate seems to suit him particularly well, and he requires little more protection, in cold or wet weather, than ordinary cattle. Sir Cornwallis Harris tells us a great deal about these animals in his African book. He says the Eland is met with in open prairies and on low rocky hills interspersed with clumps of wood, never in a continuously wooded country. It delights in the lonely groves of acacia, which are scattered over the stony and gravelly plains like islands in an ocean. Its flesh is excellent to eat, like beef, but nicer. The Koodoo, also from Africa, is another splendid Antelope, very like an ox in appearance, but with beautiful horns twisted into a wide spiral of two turns and a half. The creature generally carries his head well thrown back, partly to prevent its horns from striking against the branches of trees or from getting entangled in the brushwood, and partly on account of their great weight. The Koodoo lives in small families of five or six, and feeds on the shoots and leaves of trees and bushes. When hunted, it takes to the water, and is a splendid swimmer. It can also leap immense distances, and has been known to clear a gate ten feet high. The Oryx, of which there are four different kinds, is a most elegant animal. It has two very long slim horns close together. Seen in profile, these have exactly the effect of a single horn, and

it is said that the fabulous animal the unicorn, which we see so often tusselling with our British lion, takes its origin from the Oryx. Some people, however, think that the rhinoceros, with its one short stumpy horn, was the original animal.

THE GAZELLE.

The Chamois Antelope is about the size of a large goat; it has very long shaggy hair, deep fawn-colour in summer, faded brown in winter, and a sort of straw-colour towards spring. They are found in the mountainous parts of Western Asia and

also of Western Europe. They are very wild and very difficult to approach, as one of them always stands as sentinel on some prominent place commanding an extensive view; and if there is the slightest cause for alarm, he makes a sharp hissing noise, which calls all the rest round him to judge for themselves of the danger. If they spy out a beast of prey or a hunter, the most experienced of the herd puts himself at their head, and away they bound one after the other, leaping over the yawning chasms of rocks, and springing from one point to another still higher, lighting on the smallest ledges, where the eye of man can scarcely discern room for their feet, till they reach a point of safety where no hunter and few beasts of prey could follow. Thus they save a good many skins from being converted into driving-gloves and polishers of plate and jewellery.

The dangers and hair-breadth escapes of the Chamois-hunters in the pursuit of their calling have made many exciting stories. The food of the Chamois consists of mountain herbs and flowers and the tender shoots of the shrubs. It seldom drinks, but, like the sheep, is particularly fond of salt. Many stones in the Alps are found quite hollowed out by the continual licking of the Chamois for the sake of the saltpetre it finds in them.

There is a pretty story told of a Chamois, with two little kids, who saw a hunter coming towards her and her little ones. The only way they could escape from him was by leaping over a cleft in the rock. The mother leapt backwards and forwards several times to show the little ones the way, making wild cries all the time to warn them of their danger; but they either could not or dared not leap across. At last she fixed her hind legs firmly on one rock, and stretching her body to its utmost length, planted her fore feet firmly on the other, and the kids walked over her body, and all three bounded away, just in time to escape!

The Gnu is about the size of a large donkey, and is found in the mountains to the north of the Cape of Good Hope. The Hottentots call it the "Wilde-beaste," and it reminds one in turn of the antelope, the buffalo, and the horse. It is very wild and swift, and lives in herds. These herds are most difficult to approach, as, on the slightest alarm, away they all scour in single file, following their leader.

The Blessboc is a very beautiful creature, well known to hunters and explorers of Cape Colony. Its head and neck are of a brilliant crimson-brown, particularly bright about the cheeks and roots of the horns, between which there is a narrow stripe of the purest white down to the eyes, and then covering the whole face like what is called in horses a "blaze." "Blaze Buck" was the name originally given to the animal. I have always a special interest in seeing this creature, from a vivid recollection of a delightful adventurous story told to me when a child by a travelled uncle, under the name of the "Blessed Blessboc."

THE GNU.

Of all the inhabitants of the Antelope-houses, the most curious is the Goat Antelope which comes from Japan, and is a very rare animal. He has short stumpy horns and coarse dark hair, and something about him rather suggests the idea of a pig. The Equine Antelope, remarkable for its long pointed ears and particularly curly horns, is also very scarce.

THE BEARS' DENS AND THE BEAR-PIT.

"VISITORS are particularly requested to keep *outside* the bars." These words are painted in large letters along the Bears' dens, and one naturally thinks, on reading them, that the last word must have reference to the creatures in the dens, in spite of the missing letter e. We are quite satisfied to comply with the request, feeling no irresistible inclination to try what the *inside* of a bear may be like, and walk along by the iron bar which surrounds the dens, examining a great variety of Bears, Wolves, Hyænas, and other strange animals.

The Bear family is a very large one: they are what is called omnivorous animals, that is, they will eat anything they can find—fish, flesh, and fowl, vegetables, fruit,

and honey. Europe, Asia, and America have each their own particular Bears. are also Bears in some parts of Africa, but they are scarce. The Brown Bear common kind, and is found in the North of Europe, and America, and in

He likes wild mountainous regions and the depths of forests, where there ty of fruit to be found. He can run very quickly, and also walk quite com- y on his hind legs, which he does when he is carrying heavy burdens, such as

l tree or a young bear pick-a-back. We all know how the Great Bear, and iddle-sized Bear, and the Little Small Wee Bear used to walk about together ı-arm. He is an excellent climber, and when he descends trees or precipices, down backwards, like a sailor sliding down a mast. Besides this accomplish- he is also a capital swimmer, and in hot weather is very fond of bathing, ıg about in the sun after his bath to dry himself. He particularly enjoys wild of the mountains, such as claudberries, cranberries, and blackberries; he is

also very fond of ripe corn, and sits upon his hind legs in a field gathering, nearly a sheaf at a time in his outstretched arms, which he munches away at his leisure; but his particular weakness is honey. He is wonderfully clever at finding out a tree with bees in it; he will gnaw away for a whole day at the trunk till he makes a hole big enough to get in his paw, and then he hauls out the honeycomb, bees and all. It is said that when eating honey he every now and then takes a mouthful of ants to subdue the excessive sweetness. His paws are enormously strong, and are armed with long sharp claws for climbing and digging. The strength of his arms is immense, and he is said to have been seen to carry a dead horse over a narrow bridge. It is well known what an unpleasant thing a "Bear's hug" is.

Bears very seldom attack men, never except when provoked. The children set to watch the herds on the mountains are quite safe from them. Smaller animals they kill with a blow on the head. In winter they disappear among caverns and recesses of the mountains, the gloomiest places they can find, and make dens lined with moss either in a cave or under a canopy of boughs. Here they pass the cold weather in a sort of half-asleep condition, and come forth again in the spring very lean. Bears are easily trained when quite young to perform all sorts of tricks, but I am afraid the training process is very cruel. "Dancing Bears" used to be a very common amusement at country shows and fairs, and even now are occasionally taken about to perform. There are many stories of tame Bears. One that was very cruelly treated by its keeper was purchased by an officer. He had to take it to his own quarters in a chaise, and during the drive grew very uneasy lest his companion should become too familiar. He had taken the precaution of providing himself with a great many pottles of strawberries to keep the Bear amused. He ate them very tidily, throwing away the green part, but so fast that they were finished in an incredibly short time, and the poor officer's fears were renewed. However, he drove as quickly as possible, and arrived safely at the barracks. The Bear was frightened at first at the sight of the red coats, and would not leave his new master's side. He insisted on coming in to mess with him, and seeing a vacant place at the head of the table, quietly jumped into the seat, and lifted the cover off the dish in front of him. The colonel's astonishment when he came in at finding his place filled by this strange visitor may be imagined. Afterwards he became a great favourite with the regiment.

In Muscovy there are quantities of hollow trees in the forests, which are the favourite resort of bees. A peasant was once searching for honey in one of these when he slipped down so far into the hollow trunk that he could not get back again. There he remained starving and miserable in his dungeon for two days. On the third, to his astonishment, down came a great Bear backwards. The man gave a loud cry and seized the animal's legs. Terrified by the noise, up went the Bear

again, dragging the man after him, and so he escaped from his prison. Talking of bees and Bears reminds me of the story of an American countryman who was boasting to a townsman of the extraordinary size of the animals in the part of the country where he lived.

"Why, the b'ars is as big as buffaloes," he said. His companion having expressed

great astonishment at this, he added, "Oh, that's nothing. Why, the bees is as big as partridges."

"Dear me!" said the townsman, "that *is* curious. Why, how on earth do they manage to get into the hives?"

"Oh," cried the other, "that's *their* look-out."

There are many delightful German fairy tales and stories in which Bears play a prominent part, and are always described as good-natured playfellows to children;

and there is a true story on record of two children of four and six years old having been missed by their parents, and found at last in the forest at play with a large Brown Bear, who seemed to enjoy the game as much as his companions. One was mounted on the animal's back, and the other was feeding him with wild fruit. The parents uttered a loud scream, and the Bear, seeing them approach, quietly turned away and went off into the forest. Then there is a very pretty story of a poor Savoyard boy who came, almost dead with cold, into a hut where a tame Bear was kept. The Bear, instead of hurting the child, took him in his rough arms and warmed and comforted him through the night, and the child slept there for several times till he was discovered.

A dancing Bear and his keeper were once travelling at night in the South of France, when a tremendous shower of rain came on, and they had to beg for shelter at the house of a peasant. The peasant consented to take them in, but was in great difficulty how to dispose of the Bear for the night, as the only place fit for him was a pig-stye, and he did not think he would be a pleasant bedfellow for his favourite pig. After a good deal of discussion it was decided to turn the pig out, dispose of him elsewhere for the night, and let the Bear take possession of his stye. In the morning, what was their astonishment to find two dead men lying by the Bear! They were thieves, who had come to steal the pig, and had found instead a very different sort of creature to deal with. Miss Howitt, in her delightful little story in verse, called "The Bear and the Bakers," gives an account of a dancing Bear who got loose in the night, and, attracted by the smell of new bread, found his way through the window of the bakehouse, and frightened the bakers out of their lives, for when they came to open the door, they took the dark object in the dim light for a robber. When the Bear's master appeared, he soon put an end to their fears.

"Up, up with you at once!"
Shouted poor Bruin's master in his ears.
And he who was no dunce,
And had so many fears,
Sprang in a moment to his hinder legs
And danced a hornpipe to a miracle!

Possibly it was *buns* which the Bear smelt; for there certainly seems some special affinity between Bears and buns, though in their native forests they must be scarce articles. A pair of Cinnamon Bears (a variety of the Black Bear of America) lived for a period of twenty and twenty-five years respectively in the narrow precincts of the Bear-pit. The number of buns they must have devoured during this period, either handed to them on sticks, or thrown into their great open mouths by the visitors, to receive which they were never tired of climbing their pole, is incalculable!

At the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, the Bears increased so much at one time that there were more than the owners wanted, and it was decided to poison two of them. Accordingly some drops of Prussic acid were poured upon some buns, and when the poor things stood up on their hind legs as usual, these were thrown into their open mouths. The instant they tasted them, however, they spat them out,

and retreated to a corner of their den to think about the matter. Presently they returned to the buns, and pushed them with their paws into the trough of water out of which they drank, and carefully washed them. Then they smelled them again, washed them again, and finally, when all the poison was washed away, ate them!

Bears are very good mothers: when Mrs. Bear has two families of cubs in one year, she prepares winter quarters for her first family within an easy walk of the one

she shares with her last family, and when the summer comes, takes them all forth together to walk. Bears once inhabited Great Britain. In some old Welsh manuscripts we find the Bear mentioned as a beast of chase, and that its flesh was though as good as that of the boar and the hare. Places in Wales are often called "Penarth, or "Benarth," which means the Bear's Head. Long after they had disappeared a natural inhabitants of our country, they were kept for the cruel amusement of Bear baiting, which was one of the entertainments provided for Queen Elizabeth a Kenilworth.

The Grizzly Bear of America is a much more formidable animal than the Brow Bear. He is a native of the Rocky Mountains; and there are many stories c terrible encounters with him. Everywhere he is dreaded on account of his grea strength and ferocity. All animals within his reach fall a prey to him; even th huge bison, which he drags along and buries in the ground, repairing to it from tim to time when hunger dictates, till it is finished. He is a famous digger, but, for tunately for hunters and dogs, cannot climb trees like most of his relations. H requires more animal food than they do, but, like them, he has a sweet tooth. H wanders along the banks of rivers and among the trees and bushes, in search of wil fruits, and helps himself liberally to wild cherries and plums, buffalo-berries, and th seeds of the dogwood, standing upright and tearing down the branches off the tree as far as he can reach. Mr. Audubon tells us many curious anecdotes of Grizzl Bears and their habits. They are most audacious in approaching habitations. Onc a man was picking peas for dinner in a garden at Fort Union; just as he reache the end of a row he saw a huge Grizzly Bear employed in the same manner. I his surprise and horror he threw down his bucket, peas and all, and fled as quickl as possible to the Fort. The hunters then turned out on their best horses, and, b riding in a circle, formed a line which enabled them to approach the Bear on a sides. They found that he had emptied the bucket of peas and was helping himsel as before. It was his last dinner, so we will hope he enjoyed it! A party o voyagers up the Saskatchewan had seated themselves in the bright light of a bi fire, which is generally a complete protection against the attacks of wild beasts, an were busy cooking their supper, when a large Grizzly Bear sprang over their canoe which was placed behind them, and seizing one of the party, carried him off. Th rest fled in terror, with the exception of one man named Bourapo, who grasped hi gun and followed the Bear, who was retreating with his prey. He called out to hi unfortunate comrade that he was afraid of hitting him if he fired at the Bear, but th poor fellow begged him to fire directly, as the Bear was squeezing him to death On this he took deliberate aim and hit the Bear, who instantly dropped his pre and flew at Bourapo. He escaped with difficulty, and the Bear retired at last into a

thicket, where it was supposed that he died, but it was never ascertained for certain, as the party were not inclined to make further search for him. Both the wounded men recovered, but the one carried off was much injured. Mr. Drummond, in his excursions over the Rocky Mountains in search of plants, often came upon Grizzly Bears in turning a point of rock or a sharp angle of a valley. As soon as they saw

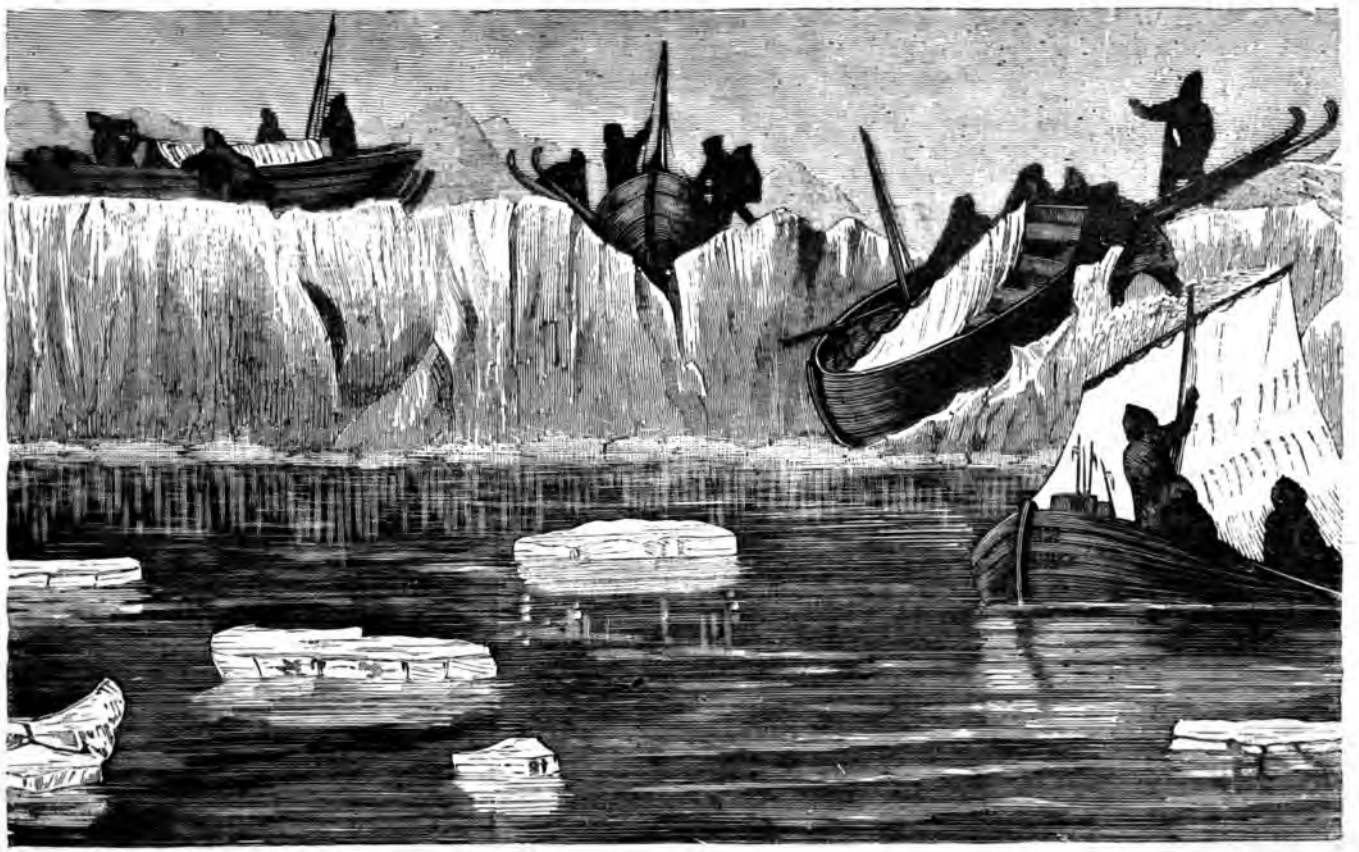
im they reared on their hind legs and made a loud noise, like a person breathing ery quickly, but much harsher. He never attempted to molest them or showed ny fear of them, being convinced that if he had attempted to fly they would have orn him to pieces: after staring at him for a short time they would gallop off. When he saw them in the distance, he generally frightened them away by beating n a large tin box in which he carried his plants.

The American Black Bear is smaller than the Grizzly, and not so savage. Its

cubs when first born are not much larger than kittens. It feeds so much on nice roots, nuts, and berries, that its meat is considered quite a delicacy, and in New York it sells at a higher price than the best beef. Black Bears hybernate in the winter in the fur countries, that is, the Far North, from which skins of wild animals are imported by the Hudson's Bay Company. They are tracked into their snug retreats, and about a thousand skins are procured every year. They choose spots for their dens under fallen trees, and having scratched away part of the soil, retire to it at the beginning of the first snowstorm, and the snow soon makes them a close warm covering. Their breath makes a small opening in the den, and the quantity of hoar-frost which gathers round the aperture betrays it to the hunter. In the mountains of Tennessee the Black Bear lives upon nuts and fruit and honey from bee-trees, and is even found searching for it in wasps' nests. It is hunted in the autumn when lopping off the branches of chestnut-trees to eat the chestnuts before they fall. When pursued by the dogs, it backs up against a tree and tries to box with them, looking exceedingly good-natured, but a single blow from its paw will kill a poor dog. On the coast of Labrador the Black Bear catches fish very cleverly, and lives nearly entirely on them. It generally seizes them in the edge of the water inside the surf, but it can swim as well as the Polar Bear.

The Polar or Ice Bear is the largest of all the tribe. It lives in the Arctic Regions, in Greenland and Lapland, and is from six to eight feet long. It is covered with long white hair of a yellowish tint, which deepens as it grows older. The hair is very close, and forms a wonderful defence against the cold and against the tusks of some of the animals on which it feeds. Voyagers describe it as wandering over the ice-fields, mounting the hummocks or huge blocks of ice with outstretched head, and its little keen eyes wandering in all directions in search of prey. It can shuffle along in the snow very fast, besides being such a good swimmer.

It is chiefly on the seal that the Polar Bear feeds, catching them very cunningly as they sleep on the ice, or come to the holes in the ice to breathe. Sometimes it hunts them by getting into the water and approaching them with a series of long dives, which it so arranges that the last shall bring it to the spot where the seal lies. If the poor seal tries to escape by rolling into the water, the Bear soon has it; if, on the contrary, it lies still, its enemy makes a tremendous spring, kills it on the ice with a blow from its huge paw, and devours it at leisure. It can also make springs in the water. Besides seals, it eats the walrus, and any kind of fish it can find, and the remains of dead whales; one has been seen to plunge after a salmon and catch it. Its senses of hearing and seeing are feeble, but it has a very keen sense of smell. In Davis's Straits a large Polar Bear approached a ship called the "Gregner," attracted by the smell of some red herrings which were being fried



SHOOTING THE POLAR BEAR.

on board at the time. The Greenland sailors are in the habit of enticing them to their ships in this way. In the Regent's Park Gardens these creatures are fed almost entirely on fish, which they catch most cleverly. Here they lie in their narrow quarters with their great fore paws spread out, or sit up in an expectant attitude moving their huge heads gently from side to side, looking such mild, tame creatures that one can hardly realize their ferocity and independence in their native haunts where they are certainly monarchs of all they survey. In the Gardens at Paris they have been kept for years on vegetable diet, but this seems rather hard on them, as they must sometimes long for a fish dinner again. They are not, however, always successful in hunting amongst their native icebergs. Captain Beechey gives us an amusing account of an attack on a walrus which he had the opportunity of watching. "One sunshiny day a walrus of nine or ten feet length rose in a pool of water not far from us, and after looking round, drew his great body up on the ice, where he rolled about for a time, and at length laid himself down to sleep. A Bear, which had probably been observing its movements, crawled carefully upon the ice on the opposite side of the pool, and began to roll about also; but more with design than amusement, as he gradually lessened the distance between him and his prey in the course of his rolls. The walrus, suspicious of his movements, drew himself up preparatory to a precipitate retreat into the water, in case of a nearer acquaintance with his playful but treacherous visitor, on which the Bear was instantly motionless, as if in the act of sleep; but after a time began to lick his paws and clean himself, occasionally encroaching a little more on his intended prey. But even this artifice did not succeed: the wary walrus was far too cunning to allow himself to be entrapped, and suddenly plunged into the pool, which the Bear no sooner observed than he threw off all disguise, and followed him in an instant into the water, where I fear he was as much disappointed in his meal as we were of the pleasure of witnessing such a very interesting encounter."

It is told of Lord Nelson, that when he was a midshipman in one of Phipps's expeditions to the Arctic Seas, he was one day missed from his ship, and was discovered with two companions attacking a large Polar Bear separated from them by a chasm of ice. On being reproved by his captain for his rashness, he answered, "Sir, I wished to kill the Bear, that I might carry the skin to my father."

Polar Bears are sometimes floated to the shores of Iceland on detached pieces of ice, and when they land they generally attack the sheep. They are, like most other large animals, devoted to their cubs, of which Mother Bear has two at a time. She makes a snug nest for them in the depth of the winter down deep in the frozen snow, and in March comes forth, very lean and gaunt and ferocious, and prowls aboutwith them. She carries her cubs on her back when swimming or when they are tired, as

swans and other water-birds will do sometimes. A Bear and her cubs was once pursued on the ice by some men, and was so closely approached as to alarm the mother for the safety of the little ones, who could not run fast enough to escape. Finding that urging them on was useless, she ran to one of the cubs and threw it as far forward as possible, then the other, and so on, as if they were croquet-balls, until she had conveyed them to a considerable distance. The little Bears seemed quite to understand their mother's plan, for as soon as they recovered their feet after being thrown forward, they ran on in the right direction, and when the mother came up they placed themselves at once across her path in the most convenient position for her purpose. There is a well-known story of a wounded and dying Polar Bear-mother, who caressed her cubs to the last in spite of her own sufferings, which is almost too sad to tell.

We have been a very long time with the Bears, and must now turn our attention to their neighbours, the Hyænas, Wolves, and Wild Dogs. There is no animal which has had a worse character given to it than the Hyæna. Goldsmith describes it in this way :—"No words can give an adequate idea of its figure, deformity, and fierceness. More savage and untamable than any other quadruped, it seems to be for ever in a state of rage and rapacity." The habits of the Hyæna are certainly not nice or endearing, nor is he pretty to look at, but we need not make him out worse than he is, and this description is certainly an exaggeration. He can be tamed without much difficulty, as has been proved many times, and deformed he certainly is not. He is, in fact, an exceedingly useful animal in the economy of nature, acting the same part of scavenger among animals as carrion-crows among birds. They clear the battle-fields of barbarous warfare of the bodies of the slain, ransack towns and villages and eat all the nasty things they can find, which in those hot countries where they live might otherwise breed fevers, and finish up the remains of animals which have been left half eaten by lions or tigers. They seldom attack man openly, and generally avoid a contest with him, but when driven to self-defence, fight ferociously and bravely. Their haunts by day are dens and caves, gloomy rocks, and the ruins of towers. At night they come forth and prowl about, and if they find a sleeping man, woman, or child, they never wake again.

Their jaws are marvellously strong, and they will crunch the largest bones for the sake of the marrow inside. The Striped Hyæna is found in Asia and Africa; the Spotted Hyæna and the Brown Hyæna only in Africa. The Spotted Hyæna is called by the inhabitants of the Cape the "Tiger-wolf," certainly a very awful name. It is also called the Laughing Hyæna, on account of its cry, which is something like a wild unearthly laugh. This creature is rather smaller than the Striped Hyæna. Hyænas can be easily tamed if taken young and not kept in confinement.

If they are shut up, they invariably remain savage, and this accounts for the surly, savage nature of those shown in travelling menageries. If allowed the ordinary liberty of a dog, they will behave as such. Bishop Heber saw one in India which followed his master everywhere. Colonel Sykes kept one tame in India, and when he brought it to England, then full-grown, presented it to the Zoological Society as gentle as a dog. He used to let it loose on board ship to play with the sailors. It never forgot its master, but always recognized him on his visits to the Gardens. In South Africa Spotted Hyænas are sometimes trained and used like hounds in the chase.

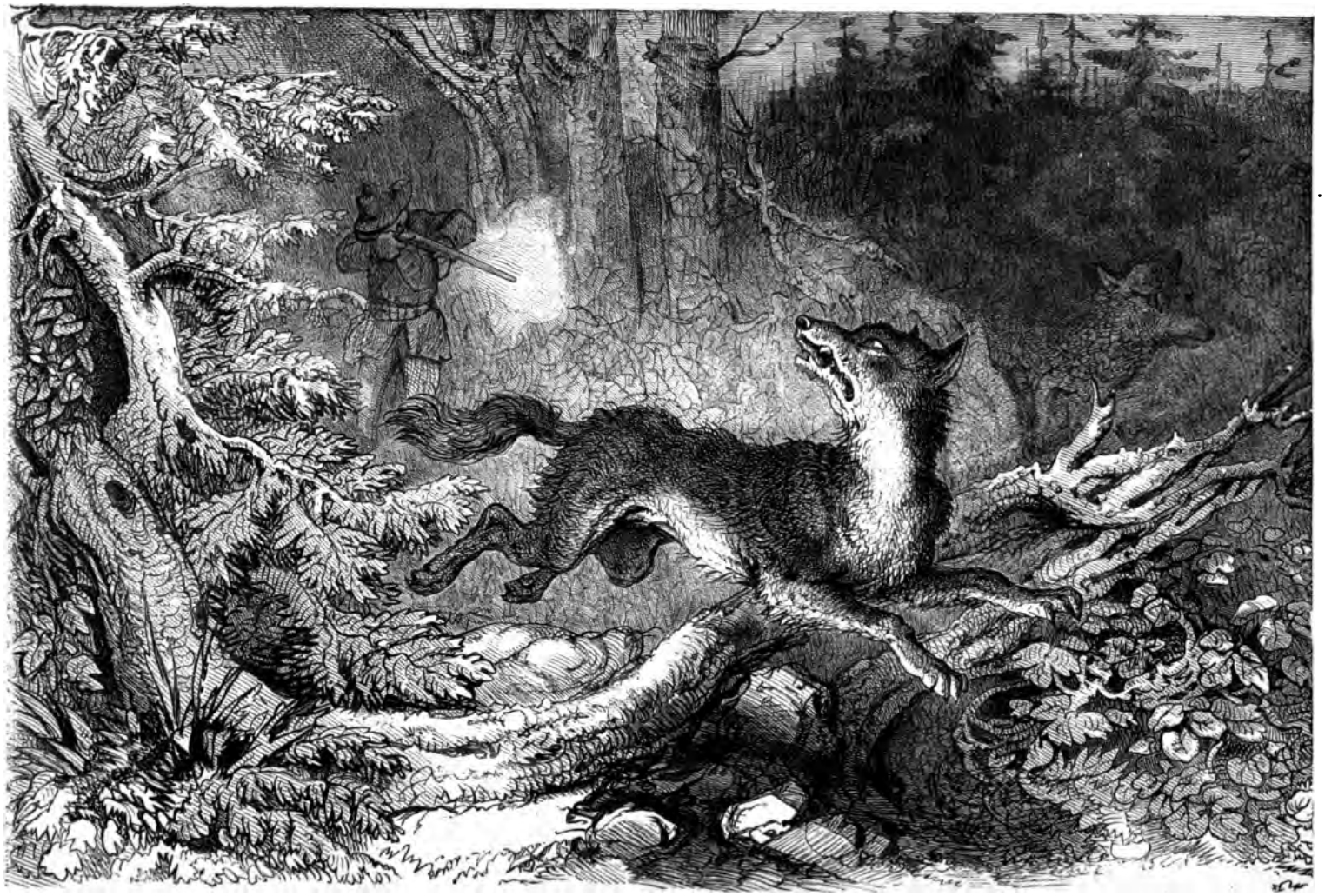
THE HYÆNA.

The very name of a "Wolf" has a terrible sound; but it is not really at all a formidable beast to look at. They are not large animals, only about the size of a fox-hound. They have coarse wiry hair of a reddish-grey, and long narrow bodies. When I was a very small child I had, like many other children, a great horror of Wolves, and it was always a comfort to me to be told "there are no Wolves in England now." I suppose the story of "Little Red Riding-Hood" had something to do with this. I heard not long ago of a little girl of about four or five years old who was taken to see her grandmother, a bedridden old lady who wore a nightcap. The child seemed miserable during the visit; she would not make friends with the old lady or let go her father's hand the whole time. When they went home her father asked why she had behaved in this way. "I know she was a Wolf," said the little girl, "and I daresay there were a great many more under the bed." I can quite sympathize with the feelings of that little girl. There are many dreadful real stories of Wolves, too. There is a well-known tale told by Miss Martineau in

"Feats on the Fiord" which makes one's blood run cold. A man was travelling in Russia in a sleigh with three children, and was pursued by Wolves. As they gained close upon him, he threw out one of the children to appease them. They all stopped to devour it, but soon overtook him again. Then he threw out another child, and another, and at last escaped with his own life. It is almost too dreadful to believe.

There are two kinds of Wolves in Europe, the Common Wolf and the Black Wolf. The former is found in the wilder parts of France, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Italy, but becomes every year more scarce. In almost every Department of France where Wolves are found there is a society which offers a reward for every animal killed, varying in the amount according to the age and sex of the creature. Long ago the common Wolf infested Great Britain. In the times of the Saxon kings they were a terrible plague. King Edgar about the year 972 used to pardon criminals who had committed certain crimes on condition of their producing a specified number of Wolves' tongues. In Wales they abounded to such an extent that King Edgar, in order to reduce their number, commanded the Welsh to produce three hundred Wolves' heads every year. The number was furnished, but not without great difficulty and danger, for three years, until the King's death, after which time the exaction was discontinued. I daresay you have read the beautiful but most piteous story of the Welsh Prince Llewellyn and his faithful dog Gelert. Prince Llewellyn had missed his chi d, and while looking for him found Gelert covered with blood. He imagined that Gelert had killed it, and in a moment of wild frenzy killed the dog. Afterwards he found the child safe asleep, and a gaunt Wolf lying by its side, dead. The faithful hound had killed it to save the child. The remorse of the Prince lasted all his life, and the lovely spot in Wales where Gelert was buried with all honours is still called "Beddgelert," which means "the Grave of Gelert."

Wolves band together in packs when they hunt for food. They can smell their prey a great way off, and destroy creatures much larger than themselves, even buffaloes and wild horses; but though they unite in this way for their general advantage, they are very quarrelsome among themselves, and if one of the pack gets wounded or weak, the others fall upon him, kill him, and eat him. The common Wolf of America differs a little from the European one. The colour varies among them from black and different shades of grey to white, the white being the most frequent colour. They are more cowardly than the European Wolf. On the Missouri River they are very abundant and troublesome to the farmers, feeding on their sheep, calves, and young goats. When hard pressed by hunger, it is said that they sometimes scratch up roots from the ground and eat them. Sometimes when they have killed an animal larger than they can eat at once, they will hide it and bury it as a dog does a bone, and sometimes lie over the spot till they become



THE WOLF PURSUED.

hungry again. Mr. Audubon, in his interesting book about North American animals, gives us a graphic account of the Wolf-hunts there, and tells us a great deal about their habits. He says they are very fond of the water, and in hot weather will walk in a river up to their sides, and cool themselves while lapping the water, just as a dog does. He says that hunters, knowing the cowardly nature of these animals, when they are obliged to leave any game on the prairie, attach to it a handkerchief or some part of their clothing, or scatter a little gunpowder round. The Wolves then will not dare touch it, though they will lie near watching it for hours till the hunter returns to take it away. The Prairie Wolf is smaller and fleeter than the common Wolf. It feeds principally on a kind of goose, wanders about in packs by day, or more commonly in the evening, and makes holes in which it burrows like a fox.

Fierce and cruel as the Wolf is by nature, it has been occasionally tamed when taken very young. The great French naturalist, M. Cuvier, gives us an account of one which showed as much affection for his master as a faithful dog could do. When full-grown he was presented by his owner to the Menagerie at Paris. For many weeks he was quite disconsolate at the separation from his master, who had been obliged to travel; he would scarcely take any food, and was quite indifferent to his keepers. At length he seemed to forget all his old associations and to attach himself to those around him. His master returned after an absence of eighteen months; the Wolf recognized his voice amidst all the crowd in the Menagerie Gardens, and on being set at liberty showed the most violent joy. Again he was separated from his friend, and again his grief was as extreme as the first time. After three years his master returned again; it was evening, and the Wolf's den was shut up, he could see nothing outside, but the instant his master's voice was heard, he set up the most anxious cries, and the den of his cage being opened, he rushed towards his friend, leaped on his shoulders, and threatened to bite his keepers when they attempted to separate them. When his master left him this time, he fell sick and refused all food, and from the time of his recovery, which was long very doubtful, it was always dangerous for a stranger to approach him. He refused to form any new friendships, and appeared to strangers an ordinary wild Wolf.

A lady at Geneva had a tame Wolf which was devoted to her, and during her absence of some weeks, pined away, and at first refused food; on her return, as soon as he heard her footsteps, he bounded into the room in a transport of delight; he sprang up and placed one paw on each of her shoulders, and the next moment fell back and instantly died, it is supposed from excitement and joy. Tame Wolves are not, however, always to be depended upon. Shakespeare makes the *Fool* in "King Lear," say, 'He's mad that trusts the tameness of a Wolf;" and an author of a

work published about a hundred years ago says, "Two young Wolves, brought up at our house, seemed to be very sociable, but they soon undeceived us. The sly animals one morning quarrelled with a dog, and tore him to pieces; they likewise killed three kids, and then marched off to the woods;" from which, it appears, they never returned.

Near the Wolves we find specimens of the Cape Hunting-Dog, who is rather like

THE WARRIGAL.

a Hyæna in appearance, and the Dingo, or Australian Dog. He is more properly called a Warrigal, as Dingo is merely the native name for dogs in general, and the Warrigal is now quite a peculiar species.

He is clearly, however, not indigenous—that is, he was not originally a native of Australia. He must have been introduced there either by survival from a wrecked canoe or as the companion of savage man at an early stage in the peopling of Australia. Centuries of a wolf-like existence have robbed him of his honest bark,

d now he only makes a low-pitched, wolf-like howl, specially calculated to "make ght hideous." He is about as large as a harrier; his general colour is sandy red; e eyes are rather small, and have a most disagreeable expression; he is very rong, savage, and cunning; he hunts in small companies, and makes fearful ravages in flock of sheep. Warrigals are sometimes kept by the natives in a sort of half-tamed ate to hunt the kangaroo, but they are never completely tamed. One born in the ological Gardens was taken from its mother at about six weeks old, and on being it into a room it immediately skulked into the darkest corner, eyeing everybody und in the most suspicious manner. As soon as it was left to itself, it set up the ost dismal howling, which it continued for days. It grew up strong and healthy, d gradually became reconciled to those who gave it its food, but always retreated to its kennel when a stranger approached. As it never barked like other dogs, it as of course useless as a guard. Its howling, in which it spent a great part of every y and which it redoubled on moonlight nights, could be heard half a mile off. With l its shyness, it was at the same time very savage and cunning. It would never ake an open attack, but snapped at people's heels when their backs were turned, d then retreated into its kennel. It was so strong, that one day when it got loose leapt a high wall with a heavy chain round its neck. Another I heard of after o years' domestication one day slipped its chain, and in less than a week upwards twenty sheep were destroyed by it in the neighbourhood. Warrigals, though ost untrustworthy as regards the human race, show great attachment to one other. One was once killed and thrown on to a small bush. About a week after was found dragged some little distance from the spot with another Warrigal, obably his wife, lying by his side. She had evidently dragged the body there, d remained watching it till too weak from hunger to move.

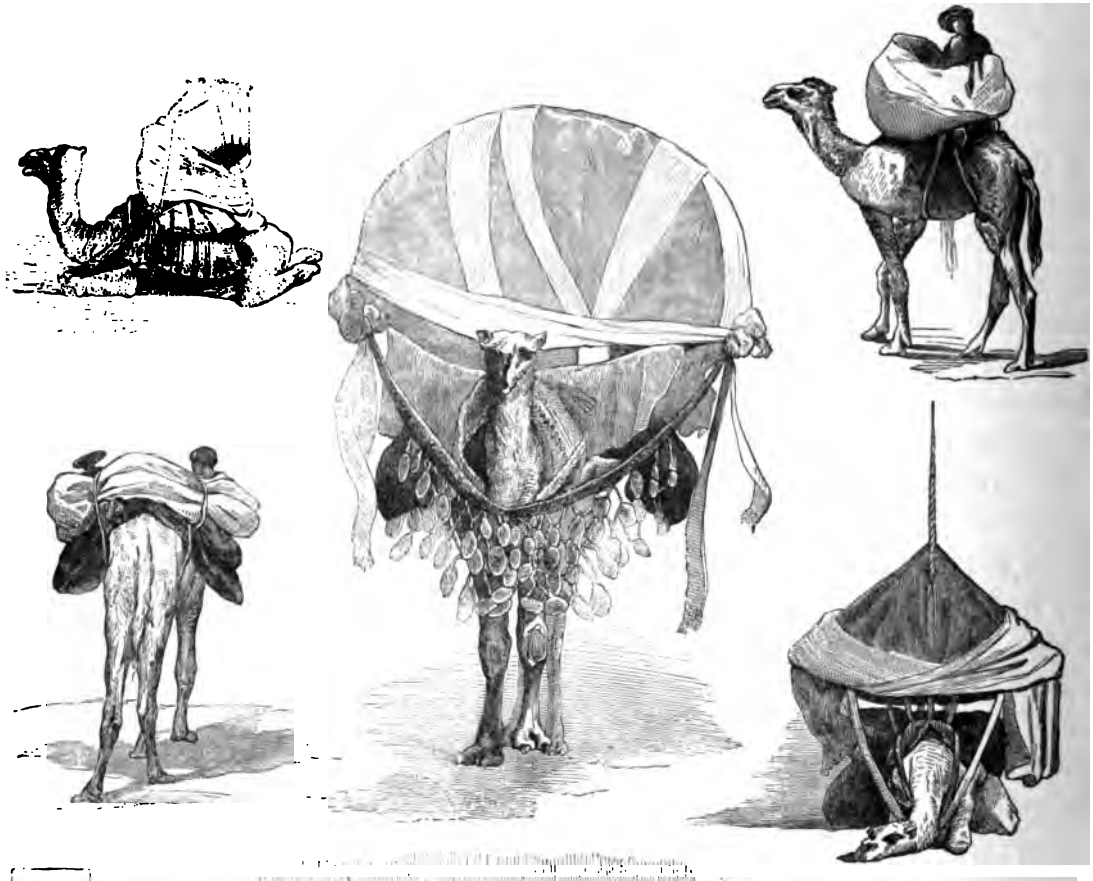
THE CAMEL-HOUSE.

After the bears, the next object of interest is the Camel-house—two large ables under the Clock Tower, where we find (unless they are walking about the ardens with half-frightened, half-pleased children perched on their backs) specimens the common Camel, and the Bactrian or Two-humped Camel. The common amel, which you may know at once by his having only one hump on his back, is e usual beast of burden in Eastern countries. The Dromedary is a more highly-red race of the same animal, used for riding and swift travelling. The Two-humped amel comes from colder regions than the other, on which account it is provided

with a long shaggy coat. Perhaps there is no animal seen for the first time which strikes us with more astonishment than the Camel,—it is so huge, so ungainly, and apparently awkwardly put together, so dull looking, and so utterly unlike anything else in creation. And yet, when we come to examine it and think about it, it is perhaps of all animals the most wonderfully made, and has been from the earliest ages necessary for the comfort and even for the very existence of man over a large portion of the world. The Arabs call it "the Ship of the Desert," and, without its help, travelling over the vast burning sands of Asia and Africa would indeed be impossible.

Look at him carefully, and you will see endless contrivances to fit him for the task of carrying travellers and merchandise across the hottest countries. His long neck enables him to look far over the level waste, and catch the first glimpse of distant water or pasture; it also enables him, with the help of his long fleshy lips, to browse on trees and shrubs. His nostrils are not round holes, but long slits, protected by thick fringes of coarse hair, enabling him to breathe when the hot winds of the desert blow strongly, and the air is thick with driving sand. His eyes are fringed in the same way with strong close-set lashes on the upper lid, so that he can see whenever sight is possible. His feet are wide-spread, with a sort of padded cushion behind his horny toes, to prevent his sinking into the yielding sand over which he strides along. His knees have smaller pads, so that he can kneel on the hardest ground without injury. These you might suppose to have been produced by frequent rubbing on stony ground when stooping to receive a burden; but you will find them on the knees of the young Camel, who has done nothing yet but frisk about in his own awkward fashion. Even his strange hump has

its uses, for it consists in great measure of a fatty substance, which, when he has to make a long journey without forage, is gradually absorbed so as to nourish the rest of his body. All this is very wonderful, and if you could look inside the creature you would find other strange things to admire. I daresay you have watched cows "ruminating," or "chewing the cud" as it is called, as they lie at their ease after grazing. You can tell by the working of their jaws that they have food in their mouths; but this food is grass already swallowed, which they are able to bring back from the second of four compartments into which their stomachs are divided, and chew over again more completely at their leisure. The Camel is a "ruminant," and gets nourishment from its food, long after its meal seems finished, by chewing it over again in the same way. But besides this, it has deep cells on each side of its paunch, capable of containing large supplies of water—something like six quarts altogether. By this provision an Arabian Camel used to the desert will go four or even five days without drinking, and in spring, when he gets plenty of juicy herbage, will hardly require any drink for weeks together. It is fed on a march only once in twenty-four hours, on small quantities of date-stones, beans, and barley, or a few mouthfuls of barley-cake if it can be spared. In addition to this meagre fare, it eats the hard and prickly shrubs which are found in the wildest and most barren parts of the desert. Its teeth are formed in a peculiar way to enable it to munch the hardest substances, and it will browse contentedly on plants which are like spears and daggers to the incautious traveller's feet. It is a saying of the Arabs that the Camel feeds on its own hump, and in a certain sense they are correct, as we have seen; but with privation the humps gradually waste away; and an Arab, before setting out on a long journey, anxiously examines his Camel's hump. As long as young Camels are fed by their mothers, and are not therefore in want of nourishment, their humps do not grow. The Arab is also indebted to the Camel for food; its flesh is considered excellent, and its milk is nourishing, and when fermented produces a liquor which takes the place of wine. The skin of the Camel is useful for various purposes. Mounted on a well-trained Dromedary, the Arab can beat the swiftest horse. To avoid danger from the bands of robbers with which the desert is infested, merchants and travellers collect together in large numbers; the goods and merchandise are fastened on the backs of Camels, sometimes as many as several thousand. These parties of men and Camels are called caravans, and the owners of the Camels generally act as guides. Journeys across the desert are arranged in these days just as they were three thousand years ago, when Abraham's steward went to fetch a wife for his young master. Some of the Camels are used for riding, and others for carrying the baggage and large skins of water. They all kneel down to be loaded or mounted, making a sort of grumbling sound till they are fairly on their



way; generally each tied to the tail of the other, though this is not always done. The loose Camels are guided by a single rein of goat's hair. The riders are provided with cushions and cloths for seats, and sometimes with chairs and boxes; but at best the motion is very uncomfortable and fatiguing. Camels do not trot as a horse does, but move the two legs on the same side together, so that the rider is jolted by turns from right to left, and from left to right. Sometimes covered litters are used for women and children, as in the picture on p. 91; and within some such screen Rebekah must have ridden when she came from her own country to join her promised husband. The senses of sight, hearing, and smell are all intensely keen in the Camel. He is said to delight in the songs with which his rider sometimes cheers him on, and in the jingle of the bells round his neck. They are often ornamented in this way, as in ancient days, perhaps that stragglers may be enabled to join the caravan. Shells called cowries, and even ornaments of silver, are also added, the shells being strung in a semicircular form. In Professor Macfarren's beautiful and descriptive oratorio "Joseph," one of the most effective choruses is the chorus of the Ishmaelites, first heard, as it were, in the distance, and then gradually approaching, in which they sing:

> We come from Gilead with our camels,
> Bearing spicery and balm and myrrh,
> Going to carry it down to Egypt;

while an accompaniment of bells to imitate the jingling of the Camel-bells is introduced. It is said that out in the desert you can detect the necks of Camels against the monotonous sky-line at a very great distance, just as you can see the masts of a ship out at sea rise before the rest of the vessel, the sight of which helps to convince one that the world is really round. Of all beasts of burden the Camel is the most patient, enduring and uncomplaining even when overladen, even cruelly so. It never refuses to rise or tries to cast the burden off. When suffering very much, however, it will sometimes utter a cry of distress. When they sink down from hunger or excessive fatigue, they are left behind in the desert to die, and all along the track through the desert you may see a line of gaunt white skeletons. Vultures may be seen gathering round as the caravan moves on, and the Arabs will never put them out of their suffering, as they believe it is unlawful to kill any creature except for food. On the whole, however, they are kind to their Camels—indeed, they are such valuable property that they would naturally be so for their own sakes. Though patient, I must allow that Camels are sometimes rather ill-tempered, and are certainly quarrelsome among themselves. They fight most viciously, and two Camels may be seen with their necks, their fore and hind legs, so entwined together

in a struggle that they seem to have tied themselves into a knot. There was once a grand gala day in the Zoological Gardens at Hull. A sort of procession was formed, in which the elephant carried a gay howdah full of happy children. The Camel, a remarkably handsome one, followed with a car of little folks, and the llamas drew another. Suddenly the procession halted, and an alarm was given, "There's a row with the Camel." My father and two other gentlemen hastened to the assistance of the two keepers, who were trying to hold the creature down by the head-ropes on each side. All the five brought their whole force to bear, yet the Camel, who was in a great passion, showing his teeth, wrinkling his nose, and trying to strike out with his fore feet, was actually strong enough to lift them all into the air at once. However, the children had meanwhile been helped out of the car. More help arrived, and at last the animal was mastered and led away grunting and grumbling to his paddock.

There are very few Camels now left in Europe. The breed has died out in Spain, where it was introduced by the Moors after the conquest of Granada, and where, owing to the nature of the climate, they were so very useful. In the island of Teneriffe they are still used, and look quite at home among the hedges of cactus or prickly pear, which is cultivated in that island for the sake of the cochineal insect. In Pisa working Camels are bred. They are fed during the winter with hay in large stables, but during the rest of the year are turned out to graze. The green and tender grass which the other cattle eat with such satisfaction has no charms for the Camel, but it devours leaves of the oak, the cork-oak, and the alder, and chooses the hard and driest vegetable substances it can find, such as the thorn, the thistle, and the broom. The Camel is trained to carry heavy loads in this manner:—Soon after he is born the Arabs tie his feet under him, and having thrown a large cloth over his back, put heavy stones in each corner of the cloth, which rests on the ground. In this way, the weight being gradually increased, he grows accustomed to bear immense loads. An ordinary Camel can carry six hundredweight, and can be made to carry as much as ten. The Dromedary, which bears the same sort of relation to the common baggage Camel that a race-horse does to a cart-horse, is very swift as well as enduring, and will keep up a pace of eight or nine miles an hour for many hours together, and that during many successive days. There is a romantic story told of a swift Dromedary. A young Arab was in love with a beautiful young lady who was extremely fond of oranges. Those of her native place, Mogadore, however, were not good enough for her; she wanted the very best fruit. Only those which grew at Morocco, about a hundred miles off, would satisfy her. The devoted lover mounted his swift Dromedary at dawn of day, rode the hundred miles, bought the oranges, and returned the same night after the gates of the city

were shut, but sent the oranges to the lady by a guard of one of the batteries. This story is probably much exaggerated.

The Bactrian, or Two-humped Camel, is found through Central Asia, Thibet, and China. English travellers see little of him, but he is quite as useful to the inhabitants of his own countries as the Arabian Camel, travelling over sandy deserts and administering to the wants of a wandering people.

THE WATER-FOWLS' LAWN.

HERE we find more Water-Fowl: many of those we have already talked about, and some of rarer kinds from foreign countries. Among the most interesting of these are the Flamingoes, of which there are several sorts, three being from America. The European species is found on the shores of the Mediterranean, but is common in Tunis and Egypt. These beautiful birds cross the Red Sea from Egypt to Arabia, before the breeding season, in immense flights. They usually build their nests near the sea, and arrange them in a most peculiar way, as their enormously long legs would not adapt themselves to any ordinary style of nest-building. They place their nests upon the ground, and build them entirely of mud, like other mason birds, such as the swallow. But the Flamingoes' nests are much more clumsy affairs than the clever little houses made by the swallows under our roofs. They are very curiously shaped, —a narrow lengthened cone, something like a churn, about twenty inches high; at the top the hen Flamingo lays two or three white eggs, and sits on them, straddling her long legs down each side on to the marshy ground, or sometimes into the water. The American is the most beautiful of the Flamingoes; it is of bright scarlet, deepest on the wing, with black quills; its legs are red, feet crimson, and eyes blue. The European bird is smaller and less brilliant in plumage. The habits of both kinds are much the same. They are found in large flocks in marshes on the sea-shore, and are very shy and wary, so that it is most difficult to approach them. One acts as sentinel while the rest are feeding and resting, and on the approach of danger gives the alarm by a sort of trumpet-like sound, and starts off, leading all the rest. They fly either in triangular lines, like wild geese, or in Indian file when about to alight. The Flamingoes are very abundant in Sardinia, but they leave it about the end of March, to return in August. Their return is said to be a most beautiful sight. To the inhabitants of Cagliari they appear at first like a line of fire in the sky: they advance in regular order, but at sight of the neighbouring lake they pause, and appear for a moment immovable; then, by a slow and circular movement they alight by the lake,

and range themselves in a line like a small army of red-coated soldiers. There they are safe enough, as at that time of year a deadly malaria hangs about the lake which would be fatal to man, and indeed to many animals. The Flamingo, as well as the buffalo and some others, is quite indifferent to it.

FLAMINGOES.

The Flamingoes belong to the class of birds called waders. They are web-footed, but cannot swim, the web supporting them in wading over soft mud. They can run very quickly; but when walking, they assist themselves by the upper mandible, that is, the upper part of the bill, which they use from time to time like a third leg.

The beak of the Flamingo is formed in a most peculiar way, like that of a swan, bent abruptly down in the middle, so that when they curl their long necks downwards and twist their heads under, the lower part of the bill takes the form of a spoon, so that they can search in the mud for food most comfortably. Both mandibles have a sort of rough tooth-like edge to them, through which the water they spoon up filters, while the tiny mud insects, and molluscs, or minute fish of the crab description, on which they feed, remain. They stand, like the stork, on one leg. Here in the Gardens, dotted about the lawn, and standing quite motionless, they look like great tropical flowers, with a long stalk and heavy delicately-tinted head. They twist their necks round and their heads under their wings, so as make a compact top to the one leg like the handle of a crutch, and one can at once understand, on looking at them, how Alice in Wonderland and the Duchess came to use them for croquet mallets, and how disconcerted poor Alice must have been when her mallet uncurled a long neck and looked up in her face!

There are other pretty flower-birds on this lawn besides the Flamingo. The Scarlet Ibis is a most brilliant little bird. Its colour is bright enough here, but it is said to be much more intense when developed under the hot sun of Tropical America. In Europe the plumage gradually fades, and each time the birds moult the feathers reappear of a paler hue. The Sacred Ibis is much larger, and white all over except its neck and tail, which are black. This bird used to be worshipped by the Egyptians, and in Egypt is still called "Abou Hannes" and "Abou-menzel," "Father John" and "Father Sickle-bill." There are various opinions as to why the ancient Egyptians made so much of this bird. Some think that it was because it devoured the snakes which troubled them, some because the marking of its plumage bears a fancied resemblance to one of the phases of the moon, others because its arrival always announced the rising of the Nile. This seems on the whole the most probable reason, as it does not appear that the Ibis devours snakes of sufficient size or in sufficient quantity to be very useful in this respect, and some people doubt whether it eats any at all. Anyway, grand ceremonies attended the funerals of these birds, and their bodies were embalmed, and still exist as mummies.

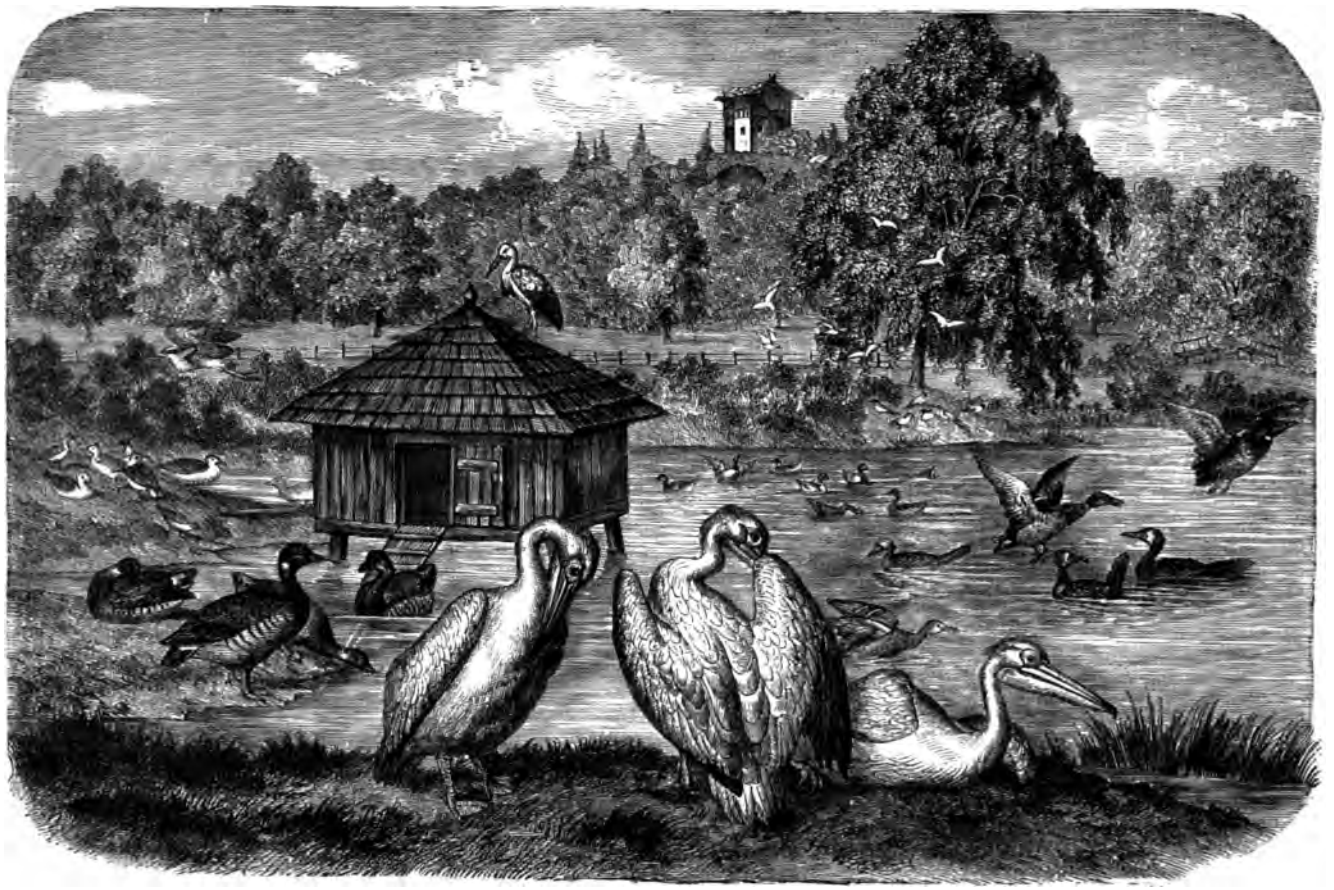
The Spoonbill is a very graceful white bird. It is hardier than most of its tribe, is easily trained, and makes a very pretty ornament to an English garden, only great care must be taken to lodge it warmly at night. I was present at the arrival of one sent to a country house a year or two ago. Great was the excitement which prevailed. When the hamper was opened, I grieve to say that the creature we expected to be so beautiful issued with its plumage, which should have been snowy white, begrimed with dirt. After much consultation we soaped him all over, and then plunged him into the fish-pond. The poor bird was frightened to death at this,

as, being a wader and not a swimmer, ponds are not in his line. We got him out as quickly as we could, all shivering and miserable, and felt very remorseful, and a long day in a hot greenhouse had to be passed before he recovered. After that he kept himself beautifully white and became extremely tame. He used to come and tap with his bill at the window of the room where we were sitting, and when we had tea out of doors, was always one at the party. He ate all sorts of things, worms, bits of meat, and fish, which he liked best. He was extremely sociable, and tried to make friends with everybody, even the ducks, but they would have nothing to say to him, and swam or waddled away indignantly whenever he approached. I am sorry to say that he died after a few months, it was thought from over-feeding.

Among the larger birds in this lawn there are some delightful little Guillemots, who have a small pond to themselves. To see the keeper feeding them is very amusing. He throws little fish to them in the water, and they swim with the most wonderful rapidity round and round, below the surface, catching them. They are so tame that they shuffle out of the pond after him, standing up on their short hind legs in the funniest way, looking up piteously in his face, and calling out what sounds exactly like "Another one! another one!" as he throws them the fish.

THE PELICANS' ENCLOSURE.

THE Pelicans are our very biggest water-birds. Their wings do not reach nearly as far as those of the albatross, but their bodies are much bigger and heavier. They are clumsy things enough on land, waddling like fat geese; but they are strong swimmers, and a troop of them on the wing are a very fine sight. They catch an immense quantity of fish, though they are not very particular about their diet, but will eat frogs and lizards, and even a rat or a mouse upon occasion. They have an enormous pouch hanging under their bill, in which they can stow whatever they don't want to swallow immediately. This pouch is very useful to them when they have to carry a supply of fish a great many miles to their young, and as they are able to convey plenty of water at the same time, the fish arrives quite fresh and "all alive oh!" The Pelican's pouch holds such a large quantity of water that the Arabs call her the "Camel of the River." There is a tale that the Pelican sometimes hatches her eggs in dry places in the desert, and then fetches water for her young ones, which she pours into the nest for them to drink and to teach them to swim in. It is said that the wild beasts of the desert are very fond of coming to these watery nests to quench their thirst, and that they never hurt or frighten the little Pelicans.



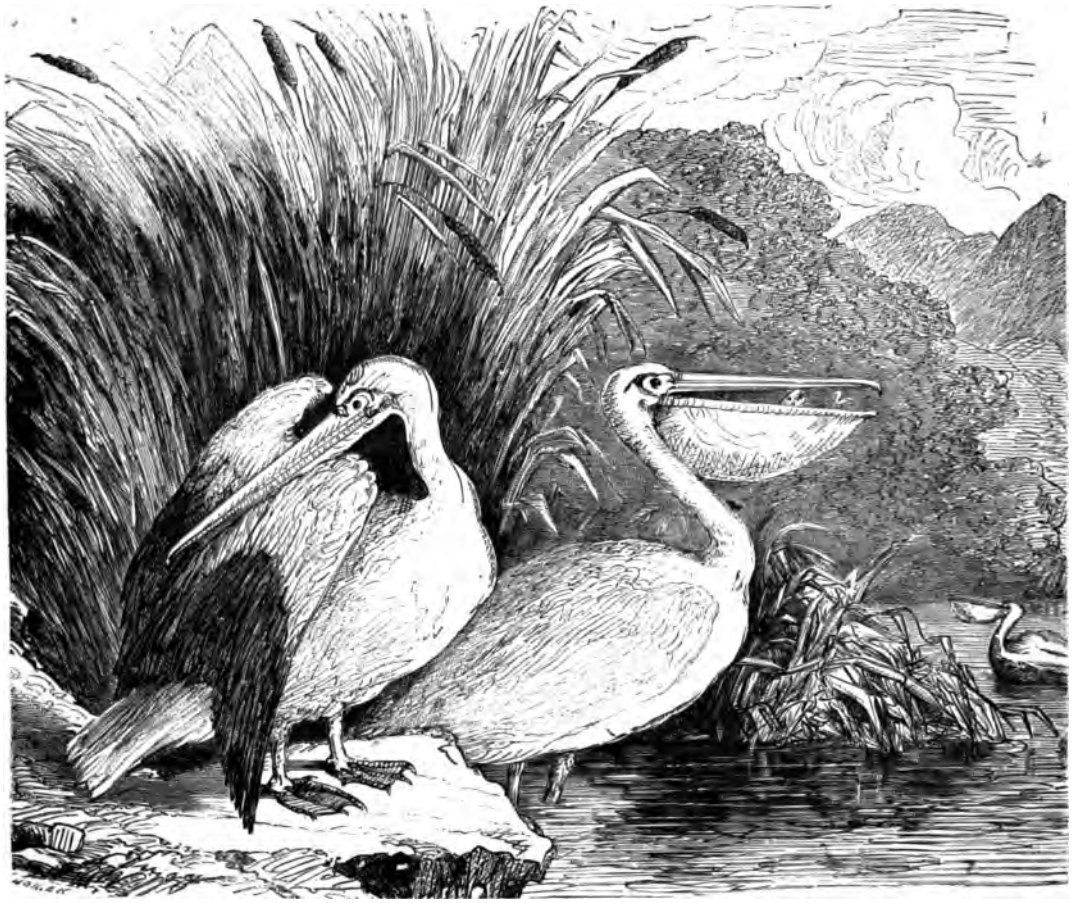
THE PELICANS' ENCLOSURE.

›oet Southey has written a very pretty description of a thirsty tiger finding a n's nest:

The desert pelican had built her nest
In that deep solitude,
And now, returned from distant flight
Fraught with the river stream,
Her load of water had disburdened there:
Her young in the refreshing bath
Dipt down their callow heads,
Filled the swoln membrane from their plumeless throat
Pendent, and bills yet soft;
And, buoyant with archèd breast,
Plied in unpractised stroke
The oars of their broad feet.
They, as the spotted prowler of the wild
Laps the cool wave, around their mother crowd,
And nestle underneath her outspread wings.
The spotted prowler of the wild
Lapt the cool wave, and, satiate, from the nest,
Guiltless of blood, withdrew."

usual habits of the Pelican, however, are not quite so picturesque as this. ive on the banks of rivers and lakes, and upon the sea-coast. They always a fracture of a rock as near as possible to water on which to build their nests. ale and female birds build them together, large and deep, and lined with moss ›wny feathers. The hen bird lays from two to four eggs, on which she sits ıwearied patience for forty-three days, during which time her attentive husband s her with food. The young birds are grey at first, and only attain their ul white plumage after the third moulting. Both parents devote themselves ng for and feeding their young with the utmost assiduity. They swim well, ınot dive under the water. They plunge their long beaks and necks into the and net the fish in their huge pouches. They can fly very fast, and have a ful power of rising to an immense height in the air. They hover and wheel ıe water, and then pounce down on a fish or a shoal of fish, flapping their ings so as to stun their prey; and when their pouches are filled, retire to the ɔ satisfy their hunger at their leisure. They feed their young by pressing their s against their breasts, so as to force the fish into the throats of the young birds. ıbit, together with that of using its own down to line the nest, it is thought must ven rise to the curious fancy of the ancients that the Pelican fed its young with blood. A more obvious reason seems to be the fact that the tip of the Pelican's ›f a deep red colour. In America Pelicans are often tamed, and so trained ɔommand they go forth in the morning, and return at night with their pouches

distended with prey, part of which they are made to disgorge, a small portion being given to them for their trouble. In his "History of Mexico" Clavigero tells us of a cruel practice of some fishermen who wish to procure fish without trouble. They break the wing of a live Pelican, and leave it tied to a tree. Its cries of distress bring other Pelicans to the place, who, he assures us, bring provisions in their pouches, which they drop near for their imprisoned companion. The men then come out



IN THEIR NATIVE HAUNTS.

from a hiding-place and take possession of the fish, having the grace to leave a few for the poor bird.

Though generally solitary in their habits, Pelicans will breed in certain localities in large numbers, mixed with other water-fowl. An African traveller gives a wonderful account of a scene in an island where he was clambering up some rocks. Suddenly there rose from the whole surface of the island an impenetrable cloud, forming, about fortyfeet above his head, an immense canopy, or rather sky, composed of birds of

all species and colours,—cormorants, sea-gulls, sea-swallows, Pelicans, and all the winged tribes of that part of Africa. All their voices were mixed together, most of them harsh and discordant, and made such terrible music that every moment the poor man was obliged to cover his head and ears to gain a little relief from the deafening noise. Many of these, and probably the most furious, were the hen birds which had been disturbed from their nests. They flew so near that they flapped their wings indignantly in the man's face, and though he fired at them repeatedly, he could not frighten them away. It seemed impossible to disperse the crowd, and he could hardly move without crushing the eggs or the young birds, with which the ground was strewn. The same traveller gives an account of a wonderful assemblage of thousands of Pelicans and flamingoes along the banks of a river, the brilliant red plumage of the one and the pure white of the other contrasting most beautifully.

Pelicans are found in Australia in large numbers, particularly near the mouths of the great rivers, where they may be seen drawn up in long lines like soldiers. A gentleman who had lived a long time in Australia told me that one night, when he was crossing the Clarence River in a small boat, he suddenly came upon a sleeping Pelican in a little creek, so close that he could have knocked it with his oar. The bird was as much startled as he was, and rose in the air with a strange trumpeting cry like that of a wild swan, only much louder and hoarser.

THE EASTERN AVIARY.

THIS aviary, which has been lately rebuilt, is very roomy and complete, and contains chiefly birds from tropical climates, which require special protection. The most remarkable of these are the Hornbills from India and Africa. They are certainly extraordinary-looking birds: they have not only enormous bills, but appendages projecting from them which sometimes spread over the top of the head. In young birds these are very small, but gradually increase in size till they are sometimes as large as the beak itself. These curious horns or knobs are not solid except in one species, but are composed of a network of bony fibres. No naturalist has yet been able to discover the use of these horns. It has been suggested by some that they are perhaps used as weapons of defence against monkeys and other animals which may attack their nests, while some have supposed that they might be employed in dragging snakes and lizards from their lurking-places, or young birds and eggs from holes and hollows in trees. A more ingenious and probable explanation is that they act as a kind of sounding-board, so that their call-note may

be heard a long way off. It certainly has a strange unusually loud sound. The beak looks so out of proportion with the rest of the bird's body, that one fancies it must overbalance the creature; but nothing of the kind: it leaps as lightly as possible from one branch of a tree to another. Hornbills eat a variety of things, fruit, mice, small birds and reptiles, and eggs. Those of the East Indies live chiefly on fruit, Indian figs, and the banyan, and are said to be particularly fond of nutmegs, which are supposed to impart to them a nice sort of aromatic flavour when cooked and eaten; but they must have an extraordinary appearance on a dish, one would

THE HORNBILL.

think. They fly with repeated strokes of their wings, and the flapping noise this produces, joined to the clattering of their bills, makes a tremendous commotion in the forests. The last time I was at the Zoological Gardens, the keeper took me inside the aviary to an inner house, where four Hornbills sat in a row on a perch together. They had only arrived a few months before, and looked most astonishing and unnatural creatures, with their great black and white bodies and wings, and huge crimson bills. There they sat close together, and began chattering and clamouring for food as soon as we appeared. The keeper opened a box containing rice made up into little balls. These he threw to the strange birds in turn, each jerking up its head in proper order, and catching the morsel in the most dexterous

way imaginable. It seemed wonderful that such great clumsy-looking creatures could be so agile.

The Curassows, of which there are several different kinds, are all natives of South America. They are nearly as large as turkeys, and in America are often tamed and introduced into poultry-yards, where they do very well, and their flesh is said to be nicer than that of a fowl or a pheasant. The Crested Curassow is naturally very tame and unsuspicious. These birds congregate together, and build large nests of sticks and long herbage on the branches of the trees, and line them with grasses and leaves, and are so easy to shoot that killing them must be very poor sport. In aviaries they suffer very much from cold and damp, and sometimes their toes mortify and drop off. Their plumage is a rich black with a greenish tinge.

The Cariamas are another strange group of South American birds. Naturalists generally regard them as related to the Crane family but in many respects they are very unlike them. They are remarkable for their harsh screaming cries, which break the silence of the lonely mountain plains and forests where they live. They are large birds, of a pale brown colour, with markings of a darker tint, orange legs, and red bills. They are very shy and wary, and stalk along constantly on the look-out for enemies. They fly very badly, but run so fast that they are hunted on horseback, and are most difficult to take after a long chase, in which they make all kinds of windings and turnings. They grow tired, and crouch down or take refuge in a bush or a tree, and then they are shot. Though so wild naturally, they do very well when tamed in a poultry-yard, agreeing amicably with the other fowls, except in the matter of diet. They prefer bits of meat to maize.

THE OWLS' CAGES.

These nocturnal birds of prey are a most interesting and amusing class of birds. You may know them at once by their large round heads, and comical little eyes surrounded by a fringe of feathers, and their soft downy plumage. In Mrs. Ewing's charming story of "The Brownies" the wise old Owl says to the little boy who pays her a visit before she will give him any information, "Kiss my fluffy face." I always think of this when I look at an Owl, and wish it would give me the same invitation, particularly the great white Barn-Owl, who with its wealth of soft white fluffy feathers looks a most kissable bird. The feelings of mankind in general towards the Owl have undergone a good many changes at different periods. The Greeks regarded it as a sacred bird and one of good augury, and it was dedicated by them to the Goddess

of Wisdom, "Pallas Athene." The Romans considered it a bird of ill omen. Ovid Horace, and Virgil all wrote against the Owl, and Mr. Waterton tells us that amongs the numerous verses of his own times which had been written in disparagement o the Owl family, he could only find one little song which expresses any pity for it.

Once I was a monarch's daughter,
And sat on a lady's knee,
But am now a nightly rover,
Banished to the ivy-tree.
Crying, hoo, hoo, hoo! hoo, hoo, hoo!
My feet are cold;
Pity me, for here you see me
Persecuted, poor, and old.

These verses, which he remembered in the nursery, so excited Mr. Waterton's pity that he resolved to do something for the Barn-Owls in his park, which up t that time had had a sad time of it, owing to the ill-feeling of the people against them The old housekeeper said she knew full well what sorrow it had brought into othe houses when she was a young woman, and there was enough of mischief in th midnight wintry blast, without having it increased by the dismal screams of somethin which people knew very little about, and which everybody said was far too busy i the churchyard at night-time. Nay, it was a well-known fact that if any person wer sick in the neighbourhood, it would be for ever looking in at the window and holdin a conversation outside with somebody, they did not know whom. The gamekeepe quite agreed with her in all she said on the subject, and always stood better in he books when he had managed to shoot a bird of this bad and mischievous family. O Mr. Waterton's return to England in 1813 he resolved to put an end to the pena laws in force against the poor Owls, which were fast becoming scarce. On the ruin of an old gateway he made a sort of dwelling on purpose for them, such as they like and trained ivy over it, and about a month after it was finished a pair of Barn-Owl took up their abode there and made a nest. Mr. Waterton found the greates pleasure and interest in watching the ways of the Owls; but the old housekeepe could not be reconciled to the change, and never enjoyed the sight of the Barn-Ow as it flew round the large sycamore-trees which grew near the ruined gateway There was one old song-writer who certainly appreciated the Owl when he wrote—

Of all the brave birds that ever I see,
The Owl is the fairest in her degree;

but Mr. Waterton, and Mr. White of Selborne, have done more than any one els to reinstate it in popular favour. Gamekeepers are still fond of shooting Owls, unde

the idea that they are mischievous; but farmers are beginning to understand tha they are in fact particularly useful birds, as they live nearly entirely on rats and mice of which they kill immense numbers at night. The pinion-feathers of the Owl are fringed with a soft down, which enables him to fly noiselessly. Thus he steals or poor mousey almost unheard. They are very hungry birds, and young Owls require such quantities of food that their parents have hard work to supply them. They pounce on their prey with their claws, and fly holding it in the same way till they get near their nests, when they take it in their bills instead, so that their feet may be free to alight. Owls have sometimes been called "feathered cats," on account of their habits of dozing during the day and waking up at night, and also from their being such excellent mousers.

Truth compels me to grant to the enemies of the beautiful White Barn-Owl, or Screech-Owl, that it will occasionally attack a dove-cote, and make great havoc among the young pigeons. It has been known to catch fish. Mr. Waterton once watched one bringing mice to its nest, and suddenly she dropped down into the water. He was afraid at first she had fallen down in a fit, and was on his way to fetch the boat to try and rescue her, when he saw her rise again with a fish in her claws, which must have made a nice variety in the dinner of the clamorous young ones. Barn-Owls make their nests, such as they are, in hollow trees, near farmhouses, in barns, or under the eaves of a church or other old building. They lay their eggs upon some woolly or downy substance, placed in a very slovenly manner. Some one I knew once took a nest of Owls. At night he hung them up in a wicker cage, and when morning came, there were about thirty mice and young rats stuck between the bars of the cage, which the poor old birds had brought for their nestlings in the course of the night. One day a young Eagle-Owl was caught and shut up in a hencoop. On the following morning a fine young partridge was found lying dead before the door of the coop, brought by the parents. Night after night, for a whole fortnight, they continued to bring partridges and moor-fowl, and once a whole lamb, which they had evidently found dead. The young bird was well covered with feathers, and not at all a helpless infant. This kind of Owl is very rare in England; it is the strongest and best armed of all the birds of prey after the eagle, and has the advantage of being able to pounce on its prey in the dark. In America it feeds on the wild turkeys. The Snowy Owl is also only an occasional visitor to the British Isles, spending its summer in the Arctic Regions. The Brown Owl is the easiest to keep in confinement, as it will eat all sorts of things, whereas the Barn-Owl must have constant supplies of fresh mice. The Horned Owl is one of the largest of the English Owls: it is not so blind in the daytime as the others, and can manage to hunt mice by day, though with difficulty. He

s very solitary in his habits, and retires into holes in towers and old walls in winter, which he passes in sleep. Of all the Owls, the Tawny Owl was Mr. Waterton's favourite: he says its voice resembles that of the human voice more han any other creature, and that if you pronounce the letter O in a loud and very lear tone, and then repeat the same letter in a drawling tremulous accent, you will ave a very just idea of the hooting of the Tawny Owl. It generally chooses

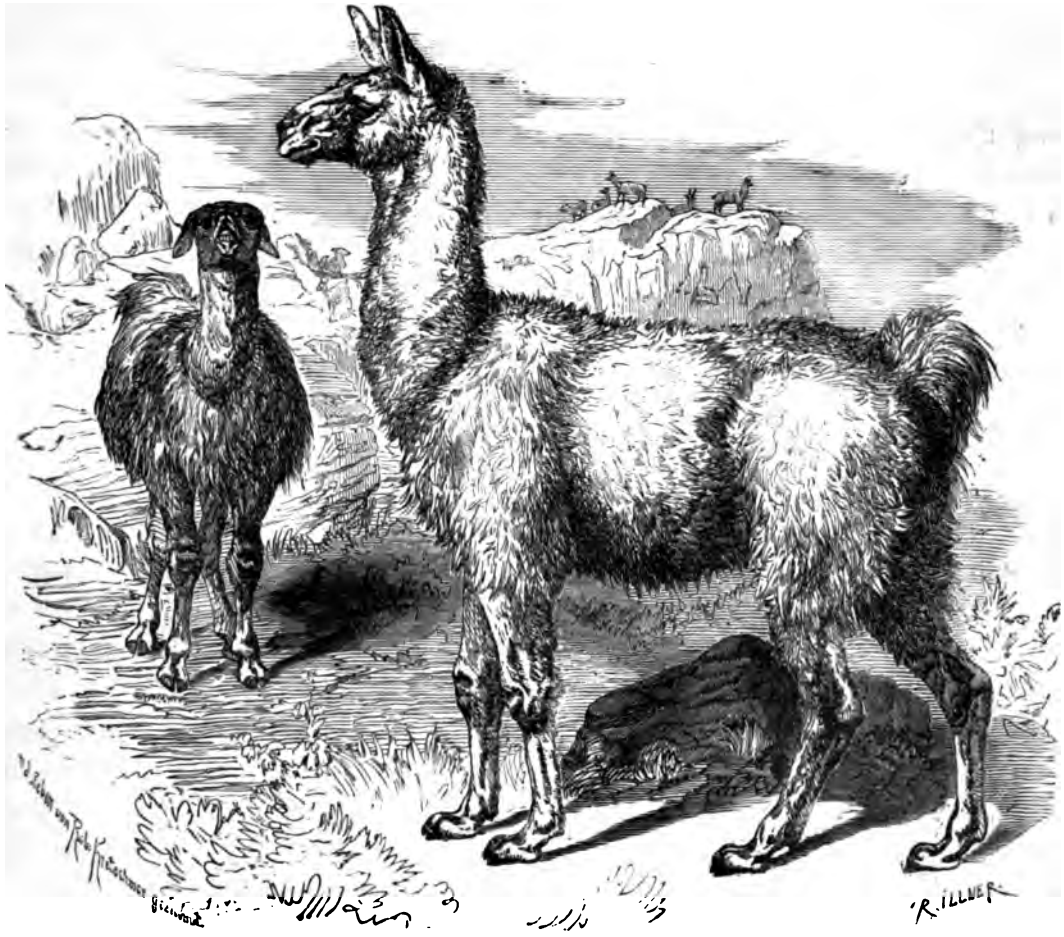
rk and gloomy woods to dwell in, but occasionally, if not discouraged, takes up abode near habitations; but a wood is absolutely necessary to its happiness. No wood," says Mr. Waterton, "no Tawny Owl." Shy and inoffensive to man as vls are generally, they will occasionally attack him in defence of their young. carpenter was passing through a field near Gloucester, and suddenly an Owl, o had a nest close by, flew at him and scratched his face terribly; and a labouring n who picked up a young Owl on the pathway, actually had one of his eyes ked out by the mother. There is one very curious little Owl found in America, ed the Burrowing Owl, whose habits are quite different from those of the rest of family. It hunts in full day, and by a bright light which would blind other rls. It makes holes for itself in the ground several yards in depth. The little

animal called the marmot is very fond of taking refuge with the Burrowing Owl this underground house, and this funny pair of friends are sometimes found su rounded with very uncomfortable sort of guests,—toads, rattlesnakes, and lizarc I once knew a little girl who had a stuffed Horned Owl dressed like a doll. wore a splendid green silk skirt over its tail and legs, a black velvet boddice, ai a mob-cap on its head, and a little pair of doll's arms were sewn on. It look exactly like a wicked old fairy. The Owl was already old when it was dressed u and sometimes the stuffing had to be repaired with a needle and thread. Wh these operations were going on, the little girl used to be in the utmost distre and would run away and hide herself till they were over. At length she decid that the old fairy was getting so infirm that she ought to have a companion to w on her. So a beautiful white Barn-Owl was dressed like a young lady, and m interesting she looked, with her head a little on one side. The little girl cared no dolls but these.

THE LLAMAS' HOUSE.

THE Llamas may be considered to represent camels in the New World. Th are only found in South America, and are wonderfully like camels on a small sc in form and general appearance; but, instead of having a protuberance on th backs, they have a slight one on their breasts. They have the same powers enduring fatigue and thirst, and are used by the South Americans as beasts burden. In their slender necks and limbs, the form of their nostrils, and their lo woolly coat, they closely resemble the camel; but their feet, instead of bei furnished with a broad elastic pad adapted for travelling on the desert, are made suit the rough and rocky mountains, along the craggy sides of which the Lla proceeds with a free and fearless step. When the Spaniards first invaded Pe and Chili, they found the Llama domesticated and considered a most import animal. Besides being used as a beast of burden, its flesh was eaten, its skin p pared into leather, and its wool spun into cloth. It was specially employed bringing down ore from the mountains, of which it can carry from eighty tc hundred pounds. The Spanish Treasurer-General of Peru, in 1544, describes t Llama, which he calls a sheep, in a very funny way:—"In places where th is no snow the natives want water, and to supply this they fill the skins with wat and make other living sheep carry them; for it must be observed, these sheep Peru are large enough to serve as beasts of burden. When they are weary th

lie down upon the ground, and as there are no means of making them get up, either by beating or assisting them, the load must of necessity be taken off." The Llamas look gentle, amiable beasts enough, but their tempers are really very uncertain and disagreeable, and they have the unpleasant habit of spitting at any one who offends them. If their drivers strike them, they immediately squat



down, and can only be induced to get up again by caresses. They are so passionate that they have been known to kill themselves by striking their heads against the ground in their rage. They have a habit, too, of giving tremendous blows with their fore feet, and when confined in menageries, often raise themselves against the iron rail of their enclosures with an evident desire to do something violent. Their teeth are very powerful, and one was once known in a sudden fit of rage to tear a large piece out of a strong door with a single effort! There are two,

if not three, distinct species of Llamas; besides which, there is great variety in th colouring of their wool. The white ones are considered the most mild and gentl in disposition.

It has been thought that if the Llama could be introduced among our Englis sheep, the quality of the wool would be improved; but all such attempts have failec as our climate is unsuited to them. The Queen had some once in the Park a Windsor, but they did not live long.

The Guanaco, or Wild Llama, belongs to the highlands of Peru and Chili; it i slenderer than the domesticated one, and lives in herds, staying up in the mountain during the summer, and coming down to the valleys in the winter. At thes seasons the Chilians hunt them with dogs; but it is only the young and feeble one who can be taken in this way, the old ones are too swift and wary, and easil escape. During the chase they sometimes turn round on their pursuers, make sort of neighing sound, and then set off again. When frightened, they often stop i their flight to gaze at the object of their alarm. The cause of this peculiarity i not understood. Some people think that their curiosity fairly overcomes thei timidity, and that they are determined to make out whether their pursuer is a ma or a puma, their chief four-legged enemy. They are certainly curious; for if person lies on the ground and rolls about in an unusual manner, or throws his fee in the air, they will almost always approach by degrees to find out what he is about This plan has often been tried by sportsmen with success, and sometimes give them the advantage of firing shots without alarming the Guanaco, who takes th noise as part of the performance. When approached, they not only neigh anc squeal, but prance about in a ridiculous manner.

The Guanacos have favourite spots for dying in. In some circumscribed place the ground is literally white with their bones. These spots are generally bushy and always near the river. All wounded Guanacos invariably walk towards the river. Mr. Darwin found in Patagonia the fossil bones of a Llama which must have been quite as large as a camel; so it is evident that there must once have been a gigantic race of Llamas on the Southern Plains.

The Bicugna is a much smaller and more graceful animal than the Llama, and has extremely delicate soft wool, which makes a beautiful kind of cloth. It lives in the snowy regions, and would no doubt stand our English climate much better than the Llamas.

THE OTTERS' CAGE.

THE Otter is one of the wildest and rarest of our indigenous British quadrupeds, and it is so seldom that any one but an Otter-hunter has the opportunity of watching him or observing his habits, or, indeed, of seeing him at all, that one is always pleased to find him in his comfortable quarters in the Gardens unmolested and quite at home. If he is not quite such a happy Otter diving in his pond exposed to the gaze of the public as under the cool shadows of unfrequented river-banks, at least he is safe from the pursuit of men and dogs, who from time to time invade his peace and his solitude. Otter-hunting, with hounds trained for the purpose, used to be a very favourite amusement of our ancestors; but Otters have become very scarce since those days, and it is now chiefly practised in Scotland, in the North of England, and some parts of Wales. The British Otter is commonest on the wild shores of the Western Isles of Scotland, for salt water suits them quite as well as fresh. Here they are constantly hunted with dogs of the terrier breed. People sally out with torches at night-time, when they leave their holes to seek for food. During the day they conceal themselves under the large stones or fragments of rock close to the margin of the sea, forming what is called a cairn. It is a hard matter to force them from this retreat. The dogs scramble over the rocks and loose pebbles for a long time, and at last give notice by barking that the game is within scent; then the keepers help the dogs to find out the hiding-place of the poor Otter, tearing away large stones from the mouth of the hole, and half burying themselves, to enable the dogs, who are yelping away in the greatest excitement, to enter. Otters fight most valiantly for their lives. The chief aim of Otter-hunters is to "tail" the Otter—that is, to grasp it by its long bushy tail and swing it aloft, and so hold it at arm's-length till the dogs can get a hold of it. The tailing of an Otter is equivalent to being first in at the death of a fox. The Otter is perfectly formed for its aquatic habits. Its long brown body is as flexible as possible, and its strong but tapering tail forms a sort of rudder in swimming and diving, enabling the animal to turn rapidly and abruptly. Its eyes are protected by a membrane, and its toes, five on each foot, are webbed. It is covered with two kinds of fur, an under vest of close short waterproof wool, and an outer vest of long coarse glossy hairs. Its snake-like movements in the water are wonderfully pliant and graceful, as any one who has watched it being fed in the Zoological Gardens must have noticed. It can swim at every depth and very rapidly, coming up every now and then to breathe. After a deep breath it dives

THE OTTER.

noiselessly like a shot, and follows its victim through every turn and maze with the utmost perseverance, for it is quite as much at home in the water as the fish are, and with its superior size and strength they have no chance against it. Sometimes the Otter, instead of contenting itself with one fish, contrives to bring up several at a time, managing not only to seize them with great dexterity, but to carry them hanging from its mouth. Eight or ten moderate-sized fish serve it for a single meal, but it is well known that in its native haunts it kills many more than it really wants for itself and its young ones. Otters make their burrows near the water's edge, concealed among entangled herbage, and generally carry them to a great depth under the bank. Here, on a bed of leaves and grass, they rear their young, four or five at a time.

In 1846 a pair of young Otters were bred in the Gardens. One day these little creatures got into their pond when it was about half filled with water, and were unable to climb its steep sides. The mother seemed very anxious to get them out, and tried in vain to reach them from the side of the pond. At last she plunged into the water, and after playing with one for some time, she appeared to converse with it, putting her head close to its ear as if she were explaining something important and mysterious. Presently she sprang out; the little one, who had evidently understood her directions, seizing the fur at the root of her tail firmly with its teeth, and clinging on. Having landed the one safely, she fetched the other in the same way.

It is said that if a fox sees an Otter go into the water to fish, he will frequently hide himself, and when the Otter comes to shore with his prey, will make a spring at him and frighten the Otter, so that he drops his prey and leaves it behind for Mr. Fox's benefit; but, clever as that gentleman is, I am afraid this story has never been proved. Izaak Walton says that an Otter will go five or six, or even ten miles a night, to catch fish for her young or to have a feast herself.

Otters are not difficult to tame, and are occasionally used to fish for men. A Mr. James Campbell had a young one which had been taught to catch fish for him so successfully that it would sometimes take as many as ten salmon. When tired with its hunt, it would decline to exert itself further, and having been well fed on a portion of the fish it had caught, would fall almost instantly asleep, and be conveyed home in a boat in that state.

Bishop Heber noticed in India on one occasion a number of Otters tied by long strings to bamboo stakes on the water's edge, and was informed it was usual to keep them tame because they were so useful in driving shoals of fish into the nets, as well as in bringing out the larger fish with their teeth. Those which the Bishop saw were almost as tame as dogs, and were enjoying themselves immensely; some swimming about as far as their strings would admit, others rolling and basking on

the sunny banks. In Sweden Otters are often kept in country houses on purpose to catch fish, and it is said that at a signal from the cook they will go out, and bring back fish into the kitchen to be dressed for dinner!

The American Otters are considerably larger than the European species; they frequent running streams and the shores of some of the great lakes, preferring the waters which are clear. The favourite amusement of these creatures, it appears, is sliding; for this purpose in winter the Otters fix on a high ridge of snow, and lying down with their fore feet bent backwards, they give themselves an impulse with their hind legs, and glide swiftly downwards, head-foremost, sometimes for the distance of twenty yards. They seem delighted with this sport, and only stop when compelled to do so by hunger. They also slide down the wet sloping banks into the water, and the trappers take advantage of this habit to catch them by placing a steel trap at the bottom of their sliding-places, so that the poor things occasionally "put their foot in it" when they are enjoying their favourite pastime.

When these Otters are shot and killed in the water, they sink from the weight of their bones, which are nearly solid, and very heavy in consequence; and therefore the hunters prefer to kill them in traps baited and placed by their haunts. If caught by one of its fore feet, one will sometimes gnaw the foot off to escape.

Mr. Audubon tells us that he had several of these large Otters tamed. They became so fond of him, that as soon as they came into his study they would crawl into his lap, romping among his books, and often upsetting the inkstand and disarranging his papers. These were taken very young. They would not touch fish or meat till they were several months old, but preferred milk and boiled corn-meal.

Stoddart has written some spirited verses about Otter-hunting:—

A jolly life the otter leads
That lurks by Eden Water;
He has nothing to do but frisk about,
And take his pick of the eels and trout
That revel at dusk among the weeds,—
The dainty old thief of an otter.

* * * *

We'll up betimes at break of day,
With hounds well versed in slaughter,
As fleet and musical a pack
As ever crossed the valley's track,
And splashed and dashed from bank to brae,
A-hunting of the otter.

THE SMALL MAMMALS' HOUSE.

HERE, and in a large aviary adjoining, which is still called the "Winter Aviary," though no longer used for birds, are a collection of small quadrupeds, most of which come from warm climates and require special care, both carnivores and rodents. To a Cat-lover like myself, one of the chief objects of interest here is the great variety of the Cat tribe from different parts of the world,—I mean the small kinds, all of which look as if they would make nice household pets. Indeed, they have most of them such a comfortable hearth-rug appearance, that one is quite surprised when one of them looks at you through the bars of the cage, and gives a savage snarl at you, but in reality most of these creatures are more difficult to tame than any. These Cats are distributed all over the world, except Australia. The Ocelot and the Eyra are from America, the Semal from Africa, and other species from Southern Asia. The Wild Cat is the European representative of the tribe. It was once very plentiful in the British Isles, but is now only found in Scotland and in some mountainous parts of Wales and Ireland, and becomes every year more rare. Naturalists used to think that the Wild Cat was the original of our Domestic Cat; but they have now come to the conclusion that our Cats came originally from Egypt, where the Cat was one of the animals reverenced by the Egyptians. There are several reasons for thinking this, one of which is that as far back as the days before the Conquest the Cat was considered such an important animal that there were special laws laid down by the Welsh princes regarding it. Its value was fixed at a penny (then a very large sum) as the price of a kitten before it could see, twopence when it caught a mouse, and fourpence afterwards. Now, at that time the Wild Cat was so abundant among the Welsh mountains, that if it had been the right sort of animal, the Welsh people could easily have procured any amount of kittens, and brought them up to catch their mice and be a comfort to them. Another reason is this: domesticated animals are generally larger than wild ones of the same description, whereas the Wild Cat is three or four times as big as ours.

I had once a splendid long-haired Cat of a French breed, one of the largest I have ever seen, with a dark striped grey coat and an immense head. He was an inveterate poacher, and after many hair-breadth escapes, and having his leg broken in a trap (after which he always continued lame), he returned no more to his family. Years after we recognized him stuffed and in a glass case, displayed with much pride by a gentleman in the neighbourhood as a specimen of the genuine English Wild Cat, shot by himself when stealing into his poultry-yard at night! Fortunately

TAME.

the lame leg, which was much shorter than the others, enabled us to convince the gentleman of his mistake. We could easily have identified our long-lost Pussy without this peculiarity, but I do not think we could have convinced our friend, who would have clung to his cherished Wild Cat adventure as long as it had a leg —or rather four legs—to stand upon!

The Wild Cat makes her nest in a hollow tree, or steals the nest of some large bird for her use in woody districts. In mountain regions she generally chooses the fissures of rocks. Sir Walter Scott describes her haunts in the "Lady of the Lake" in this way:—

> Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
> Seemed nodding o'er the cavern grey;
> From such a den the wolf had sprung,
> In such the Wild Cat leaves her young.

Many years ago a young man in passing through a wood in Yorkshire found a Wild Cat's nest in a hollow tree. He immediately took possession of the contents, consisting of three little kittens (not, I should imagine, the three who wore mittens). He had proceeded on his way home about a mile, when, looking round, he perceived the mother of the stolen animals mounted on the top of a stile which he had just crossed. Her ferocious looks and horrible cries fairly frightened him, so he dropped one of the kittens to appease her, which she instantly seized and carried out of his sight. The man then went on as fast as he could, but soon the affectionate parent was again at his heels, and he was obliged for peace sake to drop another of her bantlings. With the third he managed to escape. He might well be frightened, for in the same part of England, in the village church at Bamborough, a rough painting records an awful encounter between a man and a Wild Cat, ending in the church porch, in which "the man killed the Cat and the Cat killed the man."

In one of the cages at the Zoological Gardens an ordinary Tortoiseshell Cat lives on apparently very comfortable terms with an American Wild Cat. The American is much the larger and the stronger, and I suspect the cleverer of the two, but the English Cat is sleek and well satisfied with itself, and conscious of being in its own country, and bestows on the other little patronizing attentions, which the American takes in very good part. The Tiger-Cat from India is a most beautiful and graceful creature, striped with black over fawn-colour, and very fierce. I remember seeing one of these some years ago at a Cat Show at the Crystal Palace. It looked so lonely and miserable, staring gloomily and suspiciously at the crowd, which all the petted Cats round it were making friends with so readily. This creature, however, is quite capable of being tamed if trained properly and treated with kindness and consideration.

The Lynx is an animal which partakes in some measure of the nature of both Cat and dog, but Cat predominates. You may know him at once by his peculiar ears. They are very erect, and taper off at the tips with a tuft of black hairs, having rather the appearance of tassels. He is about four feet and a half long without his rather stumpy tail; his fur is long and thick, of a sort of reddish-grey, with dusky spots, which differ according to the age of the animal. The Lynxes are a very destructive race. The Canadian Lynx, indeed, lives chiefly on ground game, such as the American hare, but it has no objection to a settler's poultry. There are four or five European species, some of them confined to the northern regions, while others live in wooded mountain ranges in various parts of Europe.

The common Lynx is found in the forests of Norway and Sweden, extending from Scandinavia to Naples and the Pyrenees. This is a large and powerful creature, very destructive to the smaller animals, both winged and four-footed. A family of them would make prodigious havoc among the hares and pheasants in a Norfolk preserve, without prejudice to an occasional taste of lamb. Nobody, however, has yet proposed to acclimatize them. The most beautiful of the European Lynxes is the Portuguese variety, which is richly tinted, with dark spots, and is a great favourite with the furriers. The Canada Lynx is very different in appearance from these, having its fur much thicker, especially on the paws, and its tail longer. It is very plentiful in the districts about Hudson's Bay, from whence the Company import about eight thousand skins every year. This is a very timid creature, and makes slight resistance when brought to bay by the hunter. It spits and erects the hair on its back like a Cat; but is easily killed, and never attacks a man.

The Texan Lynx is another American species, also called the Texan Wild Cat, and is a most mischievous animal. He steals the fowls from the newly-established *rancho* or small farm, follows the hares, rats, and birds, and springs upon them in the tall rank grass or thick underbrush; and will sometimes even rob the ranger of a fine turkey, for he is so bold that if he happens to be lurking near when he hears the report of a gun, and a wild fowl falls to the earth, instead of flying with terror, he darts forward to the spot, seizes the prey for himself, and leaves the sportsman greatly disappointed and disgusted! Except when urged by hunger, however, the Texan Lynx never comes forth in the light of day. When he does so, he prowls about on the edges of the prairies, near little thickets, with the stealthy step of the domestic Cat. He is a fine runner, and better able to escape from the dogs than the common Lynx, never taking to a tree till exhausted.

The Caracal is found in Africa and India. This kind of Lynx is in the habit of hunting in packs, like a dog, and is sometimes trained by the Arabians and used in the chase of small quadrupeds, and large birds, such as cranes, peacocks, and

pelicans. It hunts like the panther, and jumps up at the cranes as they fly. Cara are very miserable in confinement. They generally retire to a corner of their

THE LYNX.

and crouch down in a sullen sort of way, and if any one approaches, make a hissing sound. They dislike the light in their eyes. The Booted Lynx (wh

)uld think, must be a relation of "Puss in Boots") is a much smaller species, which o inhabits parts of India and Africa, where it makes great havoc among the wild inea-fowls, and finishes up the remains of animals on which the lion or the ıther has feasted.

The Lynx of real life is, in fact, not at all an interesting animal, except as furhing a handsome mantle or a curious object in a menagerie. The Lynx of classic le, or as elevated by poetic fancy, is a beast of a very superior order. We find ı among the four-footed mourners of the deceased Daphnis, and he was especially dited with marvellous powers of sight, enabling him to see even through stone lls. This superstition still survives in one of our common forms of speech. We :ak of a person being "lynx-eyed" when we mean that he is uncommonly sharp quick-sighted. The idea was probably due to the aspect of the creature. When tated, with back arched and every hair bristling, its eyes glare with an intense ɔcity, and become as luminous as opals under sunshine.

Animals of the Weasel kind, of which we find a great variety in the Small Mamls' House, have one great drawback for the "intelligent observer." They are all, put it mildly, more or less unpleasant to approach. One cannot examine them sely for very long together with much enjoyment. Of all this tribe the Skunk North America is the worst, and I do not think any one has yet attempted to ng him to England alive. He has the power of sending forth such an odour in :-defence that neither dog nor man can endure it. Miss Bird, in her wonderful .ide through the Rocky Mountains," often alludes to these animals. In one log where she stayed she had the pleasure of knowing for weeks together that a ınk lay in his lair under her bed-room floor. No one dared disturb him, or he uld have taken the most horrible revenge, so she was obliged to bear it. All ; tribe of animals are very cunning, and very destructive to all sorts of birds and mals larger than themselves. Their bodies are long and slender, and very :ible, so that they can insinuate themselves through very small apertures. They provided with particularly sharp teeth.

)ur common Weasel is wonderfully agile, active, and vigilant, hence the phrase, ou'll never catch a weasel asleep." It has ordinarily a creeping pace, but can run y fast in pursuit of its prey. It follows the mole and the field-mouse in their s, and threads the mazes formed in the wheat-rick by the colonies of mice which :st it. In hunting a rat or a mouse, therefore, it not only follows it as long as it n sight, but continues the chase after it has disappeared, with its head raised a e above the ground, following the exact track just taken by its prey. It is much ped by its power of hunting by scent. Weasels can also climb trees and swim. e hawks are its own worst enemies, but even in a contest with them the clever

little animal sometimes gains the victory. In a poultry-yard Weasels are terrib visitors. I well remember when I was a child the distress of finding a row of pret little chickens dead, with holes in the back of their heads made by the cruel tee of the Weasel. They are very fond of sucking eggs, and steal them out of birc nests, as well as from the poultry-yard. They can convey a hen's egg to their ov holes by rolling it along with their noses. They are certainly pretty little creature but I could not help being amused by a remark made to me not long ago about o that we were watching crossing a lawn, by a lady in a country house, who w evidently no naturalist. "Dear little things! I wish there were more of them she cried out enthusiastically. She took it for a squirrel, and as it was her ov garden, I did not like to contradict her. Polecats, being larger and stronger th Weasels, are still more destructive, but are fortunately rare in England.

The Glutton of the North of Europe and America is a much more formidat little animal than either of these. As its name implies, it is a most voracio creature. It is not very swift in its movements, but makes up by patience and pe severance for this defect; it pursues its prey for miles; hunts out weak and dyi animals, and destroys hares, small mammals, and birds, which it seizes by str tagems. It lies in wait for large animals like a highway robber, and comes up them when they are asleep. Even such a big creature as a reindeer or an elk not safe from its attacks. One of its favourite tricks is visiting traps set by fu hunters, and devouring the animals taken in them. Sometimes they go to the tra merely for the sake of the baits. In North America they will follow a whole li of traps set for martens, and devour the baits, which are generally the head of partridge or a piece of dried venison. They are not fond of the martens themselve but never fail to tear them to pieces and bury them in the snow near the traps, so as to render them quite useless to the trapper. They hide among the branches trees and pounce upon large birds. In the mountains of Norway even the gre capercailzie, or cock of the woods, is not safe from their fatal embrace.

The Martens differ from the true Weasel tribe in some degree in their structu and also in their modes of life. They reside chiefly in trees, and their bodies a specially adapted for this mode of life, whereas the Weasels only climb in pursu of their prey. In England we have two kinds, the Beach Marten and the Pi Marten, but there is very little difference between them. The throat of the Pi Marten is said to be yellow, and that of the Beach Marten white; but, of cours this would not be perceptible at a little distance, and appears to vary occasionall The fur of the Pine Marten is certainly the finer and glossier of the two, and i legs are longer and head smaller. These Martens prey on hares, rabbits, squirre moles, rats, mice, game birds, turkeys, pigeons, and other poultry, and also the wi

singing birds. In the Highlands of Scotland, where the Beach Marten is called "Tuggin," it sometimes takes to killing lambs.

The Pine Marten makes its nest in a hollow tree, and sometimes takes possession of one already made by a squirrel or a woodpecker. It makes a nice pet when taken young, as it is very graceful in its movements, and has not the peculiar drawback to most of its race of a disagreeable odour. For this reason it has been sometimes called the "Sweet Marten."

The Sable, which is thought so much of on account of its rich fur, which is said to be more precious than cloth of gold, is chiefly found in Asia and the North

THE PINE MARTEN.

of Russia. They are very like Martens in their habits, but make their holes in the earth or under the roots of trees. In winter their fur is very dark, and becomes lighter in the summer. The hunting of the Sable is necessarily a most perilous business; indeed, there is no article of luxury in the obtaining of which more distress is endured. The chase is carried on in the depth of the winter, among mountains covered with ice and the deepest snows. The hunters are often overcome from fatigue, cold, and hunger, and perish. Formerly, in the Russian Empire, the hunting

of the Sables was a task imposed on the unfortunate exiles who were banished to Siberia. As that country became more populous, the animals retired farther and farther into the remote forests and mountains, and it was the pursuit of them which led to the discovery of Eastern Siberia. The Sable-hunters form themselves into parties of from five to forty each. The last subdivides into smaller parties, each of which has a leader, but there is one person who directs and controls the whole. Each party is furnished with a small covered boat laden with provisions; they have also a vessel to bake their bread in, and there is a dog and a net to every two men. They go against the stream of the rivers, drawing their boats up until they arrive in the hunting country. There they stop, build themselves huts, and remain until the rivers are frozen, and the season commences. Before they begin the chase the leader assembles them together, when they join in prayer for success and safety, and afterwards separate. The first Sable each party catches is called "God's Sable," and is dedicated to the Church. The Sables have to be caught with the greatest care, as their fur is so delicate that the least ruffling of the hair injures its market value. The usual mode of trapping them is with pitfalls.

The Pine Marten of North America is, like most American creatures, larger than an English kind. Its fur is also valuable, and is sometimes sold as Sable. It eats berries and nuts, as well as animal food, and steals honey, like the bear. It will seize a dog by the nose, and bite so hard that the dog will often let the creature escape. It destroys quantities of Squirrels, only the Red Squirrel escaping by its superior agility. It is very fond of taking possession of a Squirrel's nest, which it enlarges to suit the convenience of itself and its family, after putting the poor little builder to death.

Here in the Gardens, though they are very near neighbours, the Squirrels are safe enough from the inroads of the Martens. These little rodents are scattered all over the world, with the exception of Australia. They are graceful elegant creatures, and nimble and active in their movements, their bushy tails being of great use to them in preserving their balance when skipping about the branches of trees. None are prettier than the common European Squirrel, with which we are all familiar. Nothing can be pleasanter than the sight of one whisking from bough to bough of a pine or a beech-tree, or sitting up with its upright tail in a graceful curl, and holding its fruit or its nut daintily in its fore paws. The poet Rogers mentions it very prettily in this verse:—

Dear is my little native vale,
The ring-dove builds and warbles there,
Close by my cot she tells her tale
To every passing villager;
The Squirrel leaps from tree to tree,
And shells his nuts at liberty.

These little creatures are, it must be confessed, more ornamental than useful; indeed, they have the character of being very mischievous. They do, however, but little harm in old woods; but when new plantations are being made of rare fir or pine, they do great damage by nibbling off the leading shoots, which has caused them to be quite destroyed in some neighbourhoods. Squirrels are very active and industrious little animals. They are up with the sun, and busy searching for food during the early hours of the morning, scampering up and down the trees and frisking among the branches in a tremendous hurry. They make their nests (or drays as they are called) in the summer high up on the branch of a tree, choosing a fir-tree if they can get it. They begin by gathering mouthfuls of dry grass, and protect the outside with a quantity of sticks. The mother Squirrel then plucks off some of her own soft fur to line the inside of the nest, so that the young ones may be very warm and snug. There are from four to five little ones in a nest, and when very young they have an odd appearance from their tails being quite short and hairless. They do not grow to their proper size for a long time.

Mr. Jesse, in his popular book of "Gleanings," tells us that in cutting down some trees on the Petersham estate, the axe was applied to the root of a tall tree, on the top of which was a Squirrel's nest, and a rope was fastened to the tree in order to pull it down quicker. The workmen cut at the roots, the rope was pulled, the tree swayed backwards and forwards, and at last fell. During all this terrible time for the poor mother Squirrel, she never attempted to desert her new-born young ones, but remained with them in the nest; when the tree fell down she was thrown out of the nest, was secured unhurt, and put into a cage with all her little family.

Besides the shoots of the pine-tree and the larch, Squirrels devour the fir-cones, beech-masts, nuts, and acorns, and sometimes, I am sorry to say, they will steal and eat young birds out of their nests. In winter they hide themselves in some snug hole, where they have laid up a provision of food, generally low down in a hollow tree. Here they go into a sort of dull heavy sleep, only waking now and then on a very sunny day. They make nice pets when taken young, and if you have one brought you when pussy happens to have some little kittens, she will generally good-naturedly nurse it for you till it is big enough to shift for itself. This is the more amiable of her, as her natural instinct suggests to her to treat a Squirrel in a very different manner should she catch one herself. You must take good care not to quarrel with your pet Squirrel, however, for if it bites you its long fore teeth will cut right through your finger. I have heard of some being so completely tame that they were allowed to run about the garden and scamper up the trees, and would always return when their master called them. Having them at liberty is the only way of really enjoying tame Squirrels. The cages made expressly for them, which revolve with every

SQUIRRELS.

nt of theirs, are really cruel inventions, little better than a treadmill. Prior

> Moved in the orb, pleased with the chimes,
> The foolish creature thinks he climbs;
> But here or there, turn wood or wire,
> He never gets two inches higher.

oubt whether the poor Squirrel is deceived for a moment. He can never st, and the monotonous jump in no way resembles the way in which he would y spring about his own trees. I believe Squirrels are far happier in a large ı bird's cage than in one of these inventions. They are, however, I hope ieve, going out of fashion.

ɜ is a charming story of a little French boy who had a Squirrel that was to him, and used to bring him apples, pears, and nuts in bed in the early ;. Having noticed that his own teeth were stronger than those of his little he would crack the nuts for him. He would always go with him to school, lerstanding quite well that he must not interrupt the lessons, would remain ll inside the little boy's jacket the whole time, only poking his nose out every l then to breathe. When school was over he mounted his master's shoulder n home, and made up for the long quiet by all sorts of frisks and gambols. has many beautiful Squirrels, and America a great many. It was the Red l which was Hiawatha's particular friend. That delightful poem of Long- with all its quaint allusions to the North American animals, had an immense for me as a child. I had always the utmost sympathy with Hiawatha

> Of all beasts he learned the language,
> Learned their names and all their secrets,
> How the beavers built their lodges,
> Where the squirrels hid their acorns,
> How the reindeer ran so swiftly,
> Why the rabbit was so timid;
> Talked to them whene'er he met them,
> Called them "Hiawatha's Brothers."

Hiawatha went in his birch canoe to catch the sturgeon Nahma, the king of ıis good little brother, the Red Squirrel, went with him.

> On the boughs with tail erected
> Sat the Squirrel Adjedaumo;
> In his fur the breeze of morning
> Played as in the prairie grasses.

And when Hiawatha was in difficulty and danger in the dark cavern, he helped him to drag the canoe into a place of safety;

> Frisked and chattered very gaily,
> Toiled and tugged with Hiawatha,
> Till the labour was completed;
> Then said Hiawatha to him,
> "O my little friend the Squirrel,
> Bravely have you toiled to help me,
> Take the thanks of Hiawatha,
> And the name which now he gives you;
> For hereafter and for ever
> Boys shall call you Adjedaumo,
> "Tail-in-air" the boys shall call you.

One of the best beloved of my cats was named "Adjedaumo," on account of the dignified way in which it carried its tail.

The graceful little Flying Squirrel has a large membrane or folding of the skin, extending from its fore feet to its hind legs, not bare like those of bats, but covered with fur. These membranes do not really serve the purpose of wings, but they act like a parachute, giving the Squirrel a degree of buoyancy which enables it to take immense leaps. In the act of leaping the loose skin is stretched out by the feet, and it darts so lightly and rapidly from one tree to another as really to have the appearance of flying. When numbers of them are seen at a time leaping, they look like autumn leaves blown about by the wind. There is perhaps no creature in the world which makes such a charming pet as this. I knew a lady who had a pair of Flying Squirrels which used to dart about the drawing-room quite at their ease. They would come sailing down from the curtain-rods, and light on her shoulder as softly and daintily as butterflies. They are in the habit of hiding all the food they do not immediately want, and will steal the sugar out of the sugar-basin and fly away with it before you can look round. In their own forests they are quite as provident and good little house-mothers as our English Squirrels. I have read of one who saved all her little ones from being burnt to death at the risk of her own life. A piece of partially-cleaved wood had been set on fire, and the woodcutters saw a Flying Squirrel start from a hollow stump with a young one in her mouth, and deposit it in another stump at a safe distance. She then returned for a second and a third, and so on, and was caught at last with all her family, her coat already singed by the fire, and the five young ones untouched. The North American Grey Squirrel is one of the most active and sprightly of its race. It is up with the sun, running over logs and leaping almost incredible distances from one tree to another. Occasionally these Squirrels, being

of an adventurous disposition, leave their native haunts, and seek for experience or for food in some distant and to them unexplored portion of America. The farmers n the Western wilds regard these visits with as much anxiety as the Eastern nations hose of the locust. They come in great numbers, devouring on their way every-hing suited to their taste, and laying waste the corn and wheat-fields; but I believe hese migrations are not so frequent as they used to be formerly. These little reatures contrive to cross broad and rapid rivers like the Ohio and Hudson, and is usually said, and believed by many, that they manage this by each carrying to ne shore a piece of bark, on which it sits as if in a boat, hoisting its broad tail as a ail, and so floating safely to the opposite shore.

There is one kind of Squirrel called a Ground-Squirrel, which differs in one espect from all its relations. It is a pretty little striped creature, found in the pine orests of the North of Asia and America, and instead of living in trees, it burrows . the ground. Its underground house is quite palatial, having many long galleries ith a large cell at one end, which it uses as a store-room in winter.

Many pretty things have been written about the Squirrel. Mrs. Howitt's clever tle poem gives such a complete history of its life and habits that I must really ote it here at full length.

The pretty red Squirrel lives up in a tree,
A little blithe creature as ever can be;
He dwells in the boughs where the stock-dove broods,
Far in the shades of the green summer woods
His food is the young juicy cone of the pine,
And the milky beech-nut is his bread and his wine.
In the joy of his nature he frisks with a bound
To the topmost twigs, and then down to the ground;
Then up again, like a wingèd thing,
And from tree to tree with a vaulting spring;
Then he sits up aloft, and looks waggish and queer
As if he would say, "Ay, follow me here!"
And then he grows pettish and stamps with his foot,
And then independently cracks his nut;
And thus he lives the long summer through
Without any care or a thought of woe.
But small as he is, he knows he may want
In the bleak winter weather when food is scant,
So he finds a hole in an old tree's core,
And there makes his nest and lays up his store;
Then when cold winter comes and the trees are bare,
When the white snow is falling and keen is the air,
He heeds it not, as he sits by himself
In his warm little nest, with his nuts on the shelf.
Oh, wise little Squirrel! no wonder that he,
In the green summer woods, is as blithe as can be.

In the midst of so many strange little quadrupeds from foreign countries, on still looks at, with interest and a sort of pride, our own Fox. In England the Fo is certainly a most important animal. Squires in hunting counties think nothin good enough for it, and are quite gratified when they hear it has made inroads o their young pheasants and partridges. Farmers' wives complain certainly whe one steals into their poultry-yard at night, and flings a fat duck or a goose over it shoulder and gallops off; but the farmers themselves are generally inclined to lool on such offences leniently. They know there is a family of promising young cub to be supported in an "earth" near, and that their mouths must be filled, if they ar to grow up a pleasure and pride to the county. A lady in Lincolnshire told m that a Fox carried off a pea-hen of hers, and five young ones nearly as big as thei mother, and that she found she was expected to be quite pleased! When the joyfu intelligence of a fresh family of cubs is announced, the hunting gentlemen do all i their power to assist the interesting mother. They shoot rabbits and rooks ex pressly, to save her as much exertion as possible, and lay them near the entranc of the earth, and sometimes an old hen or a duck. No one is allowed to distur the young family, and their growth and well-doing are watched with the utmos anxiety. We know what all this care and coddling in their youth is to end in, an to one who cannot enter into the delights of hunting it seems strange and rathe sad. But I am assured by a sportsman that the Foxes "*really like it*" quite a much as the dogs, or the horses, or the hunters themselves. Perhaps there ma really be a wild half-pleasurable excitement in the attempt to outrun and outw their pursuers which carries them through, and theirs may be as painless an end a any other. At all events, we will hope so. Inside his burrow, or "earth," a sportsmen call it, unlike the poor rabbit, the Fox has nothing to fear from his natur enemies. No weasel or polecat dare molest him; for this reason, he never mak a "bolt hole"—that is, a very small hole cleverly concealed by the grass, as a rabb does—by which to escape. When the terriers are sent in after him, therefore, by th huntsmen, he is at a great disadvantage: he can only retreat into the farthest corne crouch down, and await his doom, the terrier keeping guard while the hunters di him out. Sometimes, however, he makes his den so cleverly among the roots c large old trees or under a rock, that the hunters cannot manage this, and the terrie though a very courageous animal, is no match for him alone.

The Fox is regarded in all countries as the most cunning and wary of animals There are plenty of fables belonging to various nations, all agreeing to represen him in this way. Besides these, there are many curious *real* stories of his craftines and clever tricks. One is told by Lord Brougham of a Fox which, being hard pressed by the hounds, disappeared suddenly, and, after a strict search, was found

C.H. Weigall

immersed in a water pool up to his very snout, by which he held a willow-bough hanging over the edge of the pond. Another took refuge in a magpie's nest.

A Fox was once seen to entrap a turkey perched on a high tree in this way: he ran round and round the tree, and the turkey kept turning its head round also, not to lose sight of its enemy. Reynard quickened his pace, and the turkey had to turn its head quicker too, till at last it grew giddy or overbalanced itself, and toppled over into the Fox's jaws. Foxes have often feigned death to escape. One was found in a hen-house stretched out at full length, apparently quite dead, and surrounded with slaughtered hens and chickens. The hen-wife, who had opened the door, thought that the Fox had killed himself with over-eating. She took him up by the tail, and swung him on to a rubbish-heap outside. The next moment up he jumped, and sped away as fast as his legs could carry him!

A man once killed a Fox, as he thought, and slung it over his shoulder. For a long time the Fox hung quite stiff and motionless, and the man trudged on well satisfied with his exploit. Suddenly he felt a very sharp bite in his leg. In his surprise and pain he let go his burden, and off scampered the Fox, as lively and well as possible. He had only been pretending to be dead!

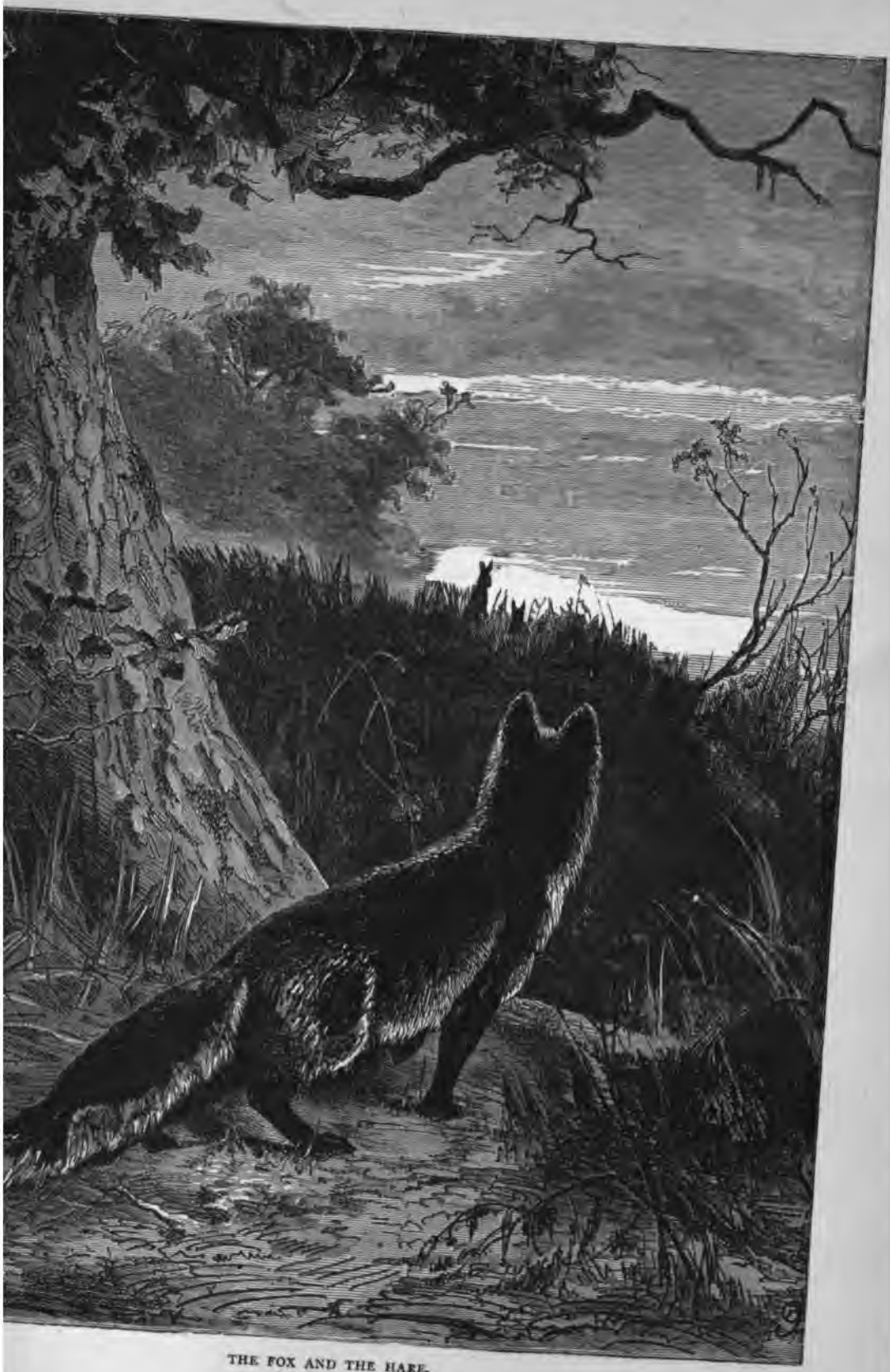
There is a very strong and not at all pleasant odour about the fur of a Fox, by which scent the hounds track him. Foxes, it seems, are aware of this peculiarity in themselves. They always run with the wind, and use various devices to try to throw the dogs out. A gentleman tells a story of his having been walking one day by a trout stream when the hounds were out. Suddenly a Fox appeared panting and breathing heavily with exhaustion; he lapped a little water to revive himself, and then, to the gentleman's surprise, instead of swimming across the stream, which he could easily have done, he crept along the brink under some bushes, and presently crossed it by means of a bit of stick lying across. The stick was so small that the gentleman could hardly believe that such a heavy animal as a Fox could have passed over it; however, he reached the other side all right, and galloped away. Presently the hounds came up, and, after sniffing about, swam over the stream where the Fox had been lapping, and on reaching the other side and losing the scent, were fairly puzzled. I am glad to say that the gentleman kept the clever Fox's counsel and would tell the huntsmen nothing of what he had seen.

Foxes eat a great variety of things—sheep, hares, rabbits, moles, rats, mice, poultry, game, frogs; and even worms and large insects when hard pressed. Near the sea they have been known to catch fresh crabs, &c.; and in France and Italy they steal the grapes from the vineyards. They hunt for their prey chiefly at night. They are very good mothers, and to see an old Fox with four or five young ones playing round her by moonlight is a very pretty sight. She makes them a delightful warm nest,

with moss and her own fur-down, in a hole, and when they are big enough, and she thinks the coast is quite clear, brings them out for a romp, and shows them a little of life. A lady told me the other day that her gamekeeper had assured her that he had seen a mother Fox bury a partridge in the earth, and teach her cubs to look for it. Foxes when caught in a trap will sometimes gnaw off their own feet to escape. I heard of one who had done this, who went limping about in a most piteous condition, searching for food for her cubs, quite unmindful of her own sufferings. We may be sure her efforts were warmly assisted by admiring friends!

The Arctic Fox, which is found in abundance in Iceland and other extreme Northern regions, is not nearly such a cunning animal as the common Fox. The Esquimaux eat them, and trap them with very little difficulty. An Arctic traveller tells us that one will stand by while the trap is being baited, and immediately afterwards put its head into it! When he and his companions sat down to rest, the Foxes gathered round them and played all sorts of tricks in their sight, and were so little afraid of them that they would even gnaw the shoes on their feet. They are not familiar enough with man to be afraid of him. In winter these Foxes become snow-white, but in the month of May, when the snow begins to disappear, the long white hairs and fur fall off, and are replaced by shorter hair, which is more or less coloured. Though unsuspicious, and therefore unwary, the Arctic Fox is not at all a stupid animal. Captain Lyon, who passed two winters among them, tells us a good deal about their habits. The sailors used to catch them in the simplest way with barrels set with baits on the ice. When they were caught they seldom attempted to bite, and, by wrapping a cloth round the hand, they could be taken out of the barrel and held, offering no more resistance than a snap at the cloth. They were kept on board the vessels for some days, and did not seem particularly anxious to get away. They were generally let loose after a few days, but one became so tame that Captain Lyon kept him as a sort of Dog-Fox: he was small and quite white, and used to be chained to a little extempore kennel on deck. He astonished every one by his intelligence, for the first day, finding himself tormented by being drawn out of his kennel by his chain, whenever he retreated there he took it carefully in his mouth and carried it inside with him, so completely out of the way that no one who valued his fingers would try to draw him out by it again.

The North American Black or Silver Fox is perhaps the most beautiful of all the Foxes, and is most valuable on account of its skin. There is no fur in the world which is thought more of, and the Russian nobles, and fine ladies in all cold climates, will give immense sums for it. In Miss Wetherell's ever-fresh picture of American farm-life, "Queechy," you may remember the splendid cloak of Black Fox possessed by the rich English hero, and how it and its owner turned up for the protection of



THE FOX AND THE HARE.

the heroine on a certain bitterly cold night-journey in the most opportune manner. These Foxes are very scarce indeed. I believe only about three or four are killed in one season in the same region. They are a glossy shiny black, except the end of the tail, which is white.

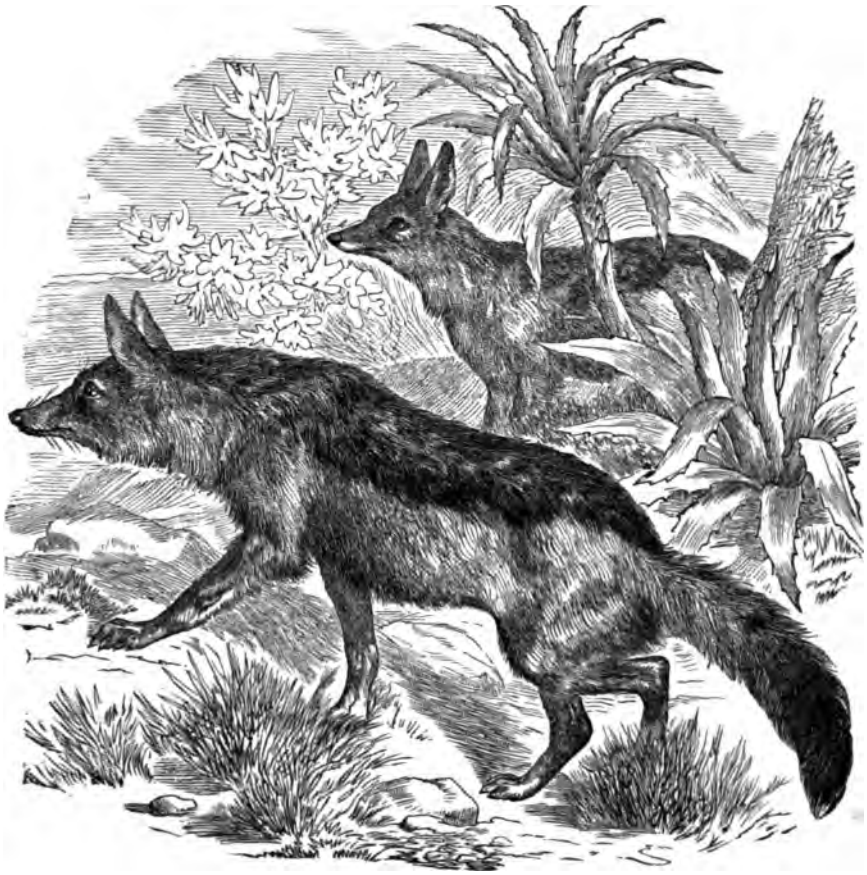
There are a few animals which seem to be regarded by their fellow-creatures of mankind in a sort of twofold character. They are classed by the naturalist among mammals, birds, or fishes, as the case may be; but apart from this, some peculiarity of temper or habits, betraying a real or fancied resemblance to human nature, causes them to be regarded as types of character, and gives them an important place in stories. The Robin Redbreast, for instance, has a Christian name in nearly every European language, and has been introduced with honourable mention in ballads and nursery rhymes ever since the old poem of "The Babes in the Wood" tells how—

> Robin Redbreast painfully
> Did cover them with leaves.

I am afraid he does not really owe this distinction to moral excellence,—as he is in reality a greedy quarrelsome little bird,—but to the songs with which he cheers us at Christmas, and still more to the confidence with which he approaches us. The Fox is pre-eminently one of these typical animals: he is an example of all the vices, and an impersonation of shrewd audacity, as represented in Æsop's "Fables," or in that amusing German tale, "Reineke Fuchs." He is guilty of as many crimes as Punch himself, but of very few blunders, and, like that hooked-nosed hero, though now and then in ridiculous plight, generally manages to have the laugh on his own side; and in spite of his wickedness, we cannot help liking him a little for his waggery. The part played by Reynard in European fable is filled in the East by his cousin, the Jackal. He, too, has a sort of double existence as a cunning and mischievous quadruped of a particular species, and as an imaginary speaker of shrewd speeches, and a pattern of successful roguery. The Jackal of Oriental fable is an important and highly accomplished personage, loose indeed in principle and shifty in practice, but a decidedly clever and rather learned fellow, always ready to make a wise remark. His shrewdness and pleasantry are accepted as a compensation for his many rascalities, and he is on the whole a popular character. His very name of "Abou Thaleb" (*Uncle* Thaleb) implies a sort of friendly familiarity. Popular legends depict him as a pleasant sort of uncle enough, not such a one as the uncle in the "Babes in the Wood," but good-natured in the main, full of genial humour, and capable of giving or taking a joke.

The Jackal of real life, as a wild animal common in most Eastern countries, has

a very bad name. When he prowls about alone, he is destructive to poultry and to the smaller animals; he hangs much about the habitations of man, and is not particular what he steals. His powers and propensities for mischief are much on a par with those of our own fox, only he has no friendly squire to take his part. But when hunting in packs, Jackals become really formidable, not so savagely destructive, indeed, as winter wolves, or the wild dogs of the African bush, but fleet of foot, patient in



THE JACKAL.

pursuit, true of scent, and capable of pulling down large game like the deer. The Jackals' proverbial name, "Lion's Provider," has really some truth in it, for a pack of them are often scared from the prey which they have just run down by the sudden appearance of a lion, or the still more formidable tiger, and the larger beast takes possession. I need hardly say, however, that the post of provider to the royal beast is an involuntary one on the part of the Jackal, and that he has not the least desire to procure a dinner for any one but himself. When the lion has eaten

enough, the Jackals steal out again to quarrel over his leavings. Of the same great family with the dog and fox, the Jackal often plays the same part in the Indian hunting-field as the fox in England, and the warrigal or native dog in Australia. He leaves a good scent, considering the dryness of the country, and runs well. His voice is an unpleasant cross between a whine and a howl, well described in the grand conclusion of Byron's poem, the "Siege of Corinth."

> The Jackal's troop in gathered cry
> Bayed from afar complainingly,
> With a mixed and mournful sound,
> Like crying babe and beaten hound.

In some parts of India the frightful howling of innumerable Jackals is incessant, from the first approach of night until the earliest dawn of day. They come up to the very doors in large packs, and all join together in making this dismal noise. The Jackal is emphatically a beast of the night; he becomes much bolder then, and carries off boots, shoes, harness, and any article made of leather, toughness being no impediment to his strong jaws. He is really useful in eating up refuse of all sorts, like the hyæna, and like the hyæna, also, he is a great frequenter of deserted buildings, and is aptly introduced by Southey as starting at the sound of Thalaba's step among the ruins.

There seems every reason to believe that the Fox mentioned in Scripture which spoils the vines is the Jackal. There was an ancient Roman festival called "The Feast of Foxes," in which the Foxes, or Jackals as we suppose them to have been, were placed tail to tail, with a lighted torch between them. Jackals are rather hard to tame. An officer in India succeeded in bringing one up so that it would follow him like a dog, or rather run on one side of him, for it would never keep behind him. In other respects it was wild and fierce, given to thieving, and a rather dangerous companion. It used to jump upon the breakfast and dinner-table, and steal bread and meat, and would share the stolen dainties with a large dog (which its master had trained to keep the Jackal in order), perhaps in order to propitiate him. Once when a gentleman and lady, with a little child, were on a visit to the house, the Jackal being as usual fastened up for the night, at midnight a loud cry was heard from the nurse, and it was discovered that the Jackal had got loose and carried off the unfortunate baby from its cot. The child was secured unhurt, and it was supposed that the Jackal had stolen it for the sake of a bread poultice it had on as a cure for some little ailment.

The pretty little animal called a Fennec looks just like a small Fox with very large ears, but in reality belongs to the dog tribe, and has a shrill sort of bark. It is found

in Northern Africa, particularly Abyssinia, Nubia, and Egypt. It lives in holes, which it digs in the desert sands, and eats insects, principally locusts, fruit, and eggs. It is particularly fond of sweet things. Mr. Bruce, who first discovered it, had one in Algiers which used to be very fond of bread and honey. It was dreadfully afraid of cats, and if it saw one, tried to hide directly. These creatures, like the Foxes and Jackals, become very lively at night.

The Kinkajou, or Potto, as it is sometimes called, is a nice little creature belonging

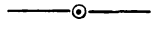
THE KINKAJOU.

to Tropical America. It is very gentle and playful, and makes a pleasant pet. It is a capital climber, and lives among the branches of trees in large woods and forests.

During the day it sleeps rolled up in a ball like a large dormouse, and it is very difficult to rouse it. In the dusk of evening it wakes up, and is all activity, climbing about in search of food, and swinging by its prehensile tail to help its passage from bough to bough. It has a long slender tongue, which it can insert into crevices in the trees in search of insects, reptiles, and birds' eggs. It is very fond of honey, which it licks out of the honeycomb, and South American Spaniards call it the

"Honey-Bear." When it drinks it laps like a dog, and holds its food in its fore paws. In the Gardens the Kinkajou lies the chief part of the day rolled up in its inner house, but late in the afternoon it will come out, clings to the top wires of its cage with its hind paws and tail, and swings backwards and forwards with great enjoyment. When hanging full length, it can hoist up its body like an acrobat with the greatest ease, so as to bring its fore paws to the wires as well as the hind pair.

It likes to be stroked and gently scratched through the bars, and has all sorts of games with the keepers when it knows them well.



THE PHEASANTS' AVIARIES.

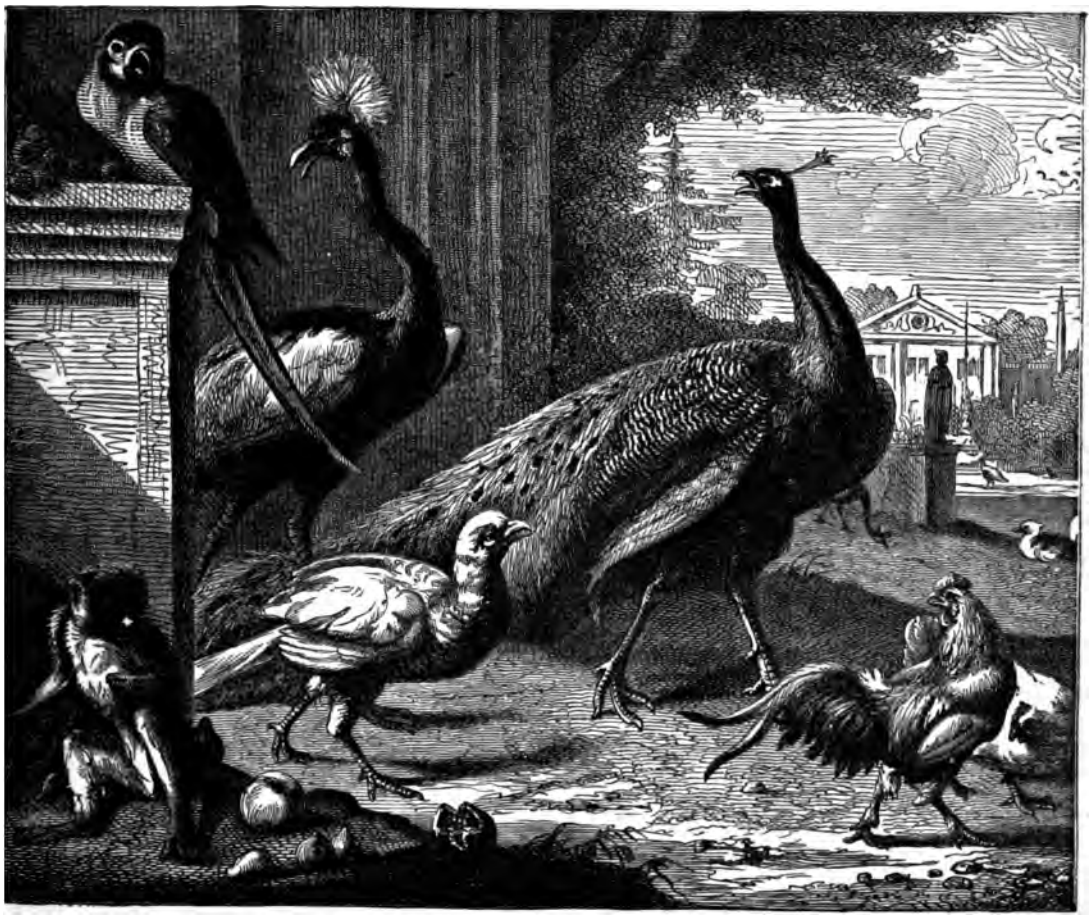
WITHOUT the members of the Pheasant tribe our poultry-yards would be but sorry affairs. We should miss the stately Peacock and dapper Guinea-fowl, the fussy Turkey and all the infinite varieties of domestic fowl; we should have no brown egg for breakfast, no drumstick for dinner; we should listen in vain for the cheery summons at daybreak and the garrulous bustle at nightfall. Picture to yourselves the desolate scene, with no life but the pigeons crooning away drearily on the roof-top, and the ducks and geese disporting themselves after their ungainly fashion in the mud.

Lord of the Pheasant kind, majestic of form, moving with conscious pride, with crested head and gorgeous train, the Peacock reigns without a rival. No wonder that in classic times men sang of him and painted him as the chosen companion of the Queen of Heaven. The same discerning fancy which gave to the Goddess of Love her attendant doves, and made the sage and solemn owl the emblem of the Goddess of Wisdom, while typifying the might of sovereignty by the royal eagle of Jove, chose for his consort a symbol no less apt of the pomp and magnificence of queenly dignity.

The Peacock still occupies a high place in several of the religious systems of the East, and there are instances on record of enthusiastic young sportsmen from England who have narrowly escaped with their lives for outraging in ignorance or wantonness the feelings of the sensitive Hindoos by killing the sacred bird.

In some parts of India and Ceylon, where the Peacocks have been left unmolested from generation to generation, their numbers have increased so enormously that the noise of their cries is said to be distracting. We read of the importation of Peacocks as valuable treasures from the East into Judea in the time of Solomon,

ıd afterwards into Greece. In the time of the Roman Empire the royal Peacock as the chief ornament of imperial banquets, being valued rather for its splendid lumage and for the vast expense at which it was provided than for any particular elicacy of flavour. To modern taste, indeed, a full-grown bird is positively nasty, ıd when we read of large dishes of Peacocks' brains being served at sumptuous ıtertainments, we must attribute the senseless display to the same spirit of coarse



THE PEACOCK.

xtravagance which found gratification in messes of nightingales' tongues, and was eady to pay for a very choice fish its weight in silver.

Closely akin to the common Peacock are the beautiful varieties of the so-called ris Peacock or Peacock-Pheasant, which are found in India and Thibet, and com- ine the elegance of the Pheasant with some of the most distinctive markings f the Peacock.

Less beautiful than these in form, but unsurpassed in the delicacy of its crest and the metallic lustre of its plumage, now red, now blue, fading into soft violet, or blazing into green and gold, is the Monal or Himalayan Pheasant. The pursuit of these lovely birds is attended with difficulty and not uncommonly with danger. Frequenting as they do the forest-clad flanks of the gigantic mountains which form the northern barrier of India, there is often no access to their haunts but by a narrow goat-track winding along the precipitous hill-side. Often the sportsman, after making a successful shot, is mortified to see the dead or wounded bird reel headlong down like a flash of light, and plunge far out of ken into the jungle below. A toilsome search of hours may only be rewarded by finding that a jackal or eagle has been too quick for you, and that nothing remains of the jewelled treasure you had hoped to secure but a handful of blood-stained feathers.

A not less interesting dweller in the same country is the Jungle-fowl, who, though of comparatively humble origin and appearance, himself deserves consideration as a variety of the original type which has produced under domestication all the wonderful breeds of the poultry-yard.

Northward from the great "abode of snow" we come to another country, which should be remembered as a favourite home of the Pheasant kind—the vast empire of China. Here dwells the most striking of all the tribe, called after Lady Amherst, who brought to England the first specimens ever seen here. The following description I quote to give an idea of the marvels of the plumage of the male bird, which in this, as in the kindred species, is always more brilliant and ornamental than that of the female where there is any difference. "The irides are light, the naked skin of the face is light blue, the feathers of the forehead are green, but the long plumes which form the crest are crimson. The tippet, which is so characteristic a feature in the bird, is white, each feather being margined with a dark green band, and having a second narrow band at some distance from the tip. The front of the neck, the breast, shoulders, back, and wing-coverts are of an exquisite metallic green, each feather being tipped with velvety black;" and so on.

Scarcely less gorgeous are the Golden Pheasants, whose plumage is a dazzling mosaic of the most vivid tints of red, yellow, and blue. Their shape is delicate, their walk dainty, and they look like the chosen pets, the spoilt children of Nature. Yet, wearied by excess of colour, the eye turns from them without much regret to dwell with a sense of relief upon the more tender and harmonious attire of their kinsfolk, the Silver Pheasants. It is like the difference between the blaze of noon and the soft sheen of moonlight, and one realizes with wonder that out of the simple elements of black and white Nature has produced a masterpiece which she has scarcely surpassed when lavishing all the most brilliant colours of her palette.

We are indebted to China for many other species known in our aviaries, such as the Eared Pheasants and some of the finest of the Horned Pheasants, while our coverts are already enriched by a ring-necked variety of the common Pheasant from the same country, and will, I hope, before long find a place for the magnificent Reeves's Pheasant, whose tail has the extraordinary length of six feet. This splendid bird is now bred in Belgium, and would be a capital addition to the game birds of our country.

It would be strange indeed if the Malay Peninsula and the adjacent islands, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, and many others, the Paradise of the most gorgeous tropical birds, did not add their own exquisite types to the list of the Pheasant family. We are not surprised, then, when we find that the most splendid variety of Peacock is a native of Java, and that the same favoured district is the home of a bird which might almost aspire to share his regal honours, the Argus Pheasant. The flight of this glorious creature, the whirring discs of its deep shield-like wings, would be a grand sight to witness. Few, however, even of the natives of the countries which it inhabits, have been so fortunate as to have this treat, so acute are its senses, so shy and retiring its habits. Familiar as we are from pictures with its whole aspect, the long graceful tail, the quaint enamelled eyes which gem its whole body, giving it at once its name and its peculiar charm, it is difficult to believe, though probably true, that there are not twenty people living who have so much as caught a glimpse of it in its wild state.

But we must pass, however reluctantly, from these beautiful Asiatic forms, and glance at their kinsfolk, more or less closely allied, in our own country.

Two hundred years ago, when England was much less enclosed and broken up than it is now, the Great Bustard reigned supreme, in bulk at least, among the land-birds of our islands. Flocks of as many as fifty of these giants might be seen stalking over the open wolds and plains, and, being wary and difficult of approach, they held their own for a long time against the encroachments of civilization. They have, however, succumbed to increasing population and improved methods of destruction, and have met the fate which is in store for the Red Indian and the buffalo in America. They have left to occupy their place of honour the Great Wood Grouse, or Capercailzie, a noble bird of the Pheasant kind, who enjoys exceptional patronage and protection, and may be expected to survive and even increase in numbers.

The home of the Capercailzie is in the pine woods of Northern Europe. It is still common in Norway, Sweden, Russia, and Germany, and it has been successfully re-introduced into Scotland after becoming extinct. The great size and fine plumage of the bird, and the lonely grandeur of the forests which are its favourite

haunts, combine to give a charm and excitement to the pursuit of the Capercailzie, though it is hardly worth shooting to be eaten, the flesh having a somewhat coarse texture, and being apt to taste of the turpentine from the leaves and buds of the Scotch fir, which are the bird's principal food. Some one has gone so far as to remark that the Capercailzie is a good game bird, *but* that "you cannot get near him; and when you get near him you can't see him; and when you see him you can't hit him; and when you hit him you can't kill him; and when you kill him you can't eat him."

The Capercailzie in the breeding season shows in a very curious way the same desire to make himself attractive, which is seen in the fantastic displays of the black grouse, peacocks, and turkeys. In all of these the ornamental tail plays a conspicuous part. The bough of the pine-tree or other conspicuous place is selected by the Capercailzie, and the following is a faithful description of the scene by a close observer: "At this period, and often when the ground is deeply covered with snow, the cock stations himself on a pine, and begins his love-song or 'play,' as it is termed in Sweden, to attract the hens about him. This is usually from the first dawn of day to sunrise, or from a little after sunset until it is quite dark. The time, however, more or less depends on the mildness of the weather and the advanced state of the season. During his 'play,' the neck of the Capercailzie is stretched out, his tail is raised and spread like a fan, his wings droop, his feathers are ruffled, and, in short, he much resembles an angry turkey-cock. He begins his 'play' with a call something resembling 'Peller! Peller! Peller!' He repeats these sounds at first at some little intervals, but as he proceeds they increase in rapidity, and, after perhaps the lapse of a minute or so, he makes a sort of gulp in his throat, and finishes with sucking in, as it were, his breath. During the continuance of this latter process, which only lasts for a few seconds, the head of the Capercailzie is thrown up, his eyes are partially closed, and his whole appearance would denote that he is worked up into an agony of passion. At this time his faculties are much absorbed, and it is not difficult to approach him; many, indeed, assert that the Capercailzie can then neither see nor hear, and that he is not aware of the report or flash of a gun, even if fired near him."

Next to the Capercailzie in size comes the common Pheasant, introduced perhaps six hundred years ago into this country, and completely naturalized. Nothing, perhaps, is more beautiful in the gallinaceous birds than the adaptation of their plumage to their mode of life and surroundings. This is especially true of the smaller kinds. Many of them are powerful enough on the wing, and the swiftest hawk finds it hard to overtake an old Grouse in full flight. But as most of these birds live on the ground, while their deadly enemies sail high overhead with untiring wings and piercing sight, their race would soon be exterminated had not

CAPERCAILZIE AT "PLAY."

kind Nature given them exceptional means of protection, being most careful for the females and young, who most need her care. So the prevailing tint of the Pin-tailed Sand-Grouse of the plains of Africa, Asia, and Southern Europe, is a sandy yellow.

How perfectly the mottled brown of the hen Pheasant blends with the tones of the woodland undergrowth! Look into a stubble-field on an autumn evening, and you may see a covey of Partridges fearlessly pluming themselves or enjoying their evening meal. Now climb the gate, and walk up to them, and as you approach them their forms seem to shrink and fade before your eyes. You are twenty paces from them, and the plump forms have vanished like ghosts, so close do they crouch, so marvellously do their colours melt into the tints of the ground. You rub your eyes and fancy you must have been mistaken, and that the birds were airy nothings of your brain's fashioning, when a whirr at your very feet makes you start, and before you have collected your wits, the whole covey are out of sight, far over the hedge, making for some more retired feeding-ground.

Again, picture yourself on a Highland moor in August. Stretching on every side, broken only by the ragged fringe of birch-trees which marks the course of a scurrying burn, are undulating heather-clad hills, combining soft greens with the rich browns and purples of peat and heather; beyond tower the mountains with a gleam or two of snow, massive grey boulders, deep scars of torrent-beds, and here and there a patch of green where some ice-cold spring wells from the mountain-side, and loses itself in beds of treacherous moss. Two setters are ranging freely before you, when in a moment they stop short as if turned to marble. You know by the eager gaze of one that the game is within a yard of his nose, but you might peer long into the heather before spying the old Grouse in his snug harbourage, were he not betrayed by the scarlet brow and the full eye beneath fixed upon yours.

Once more you toil up the mountain-side. You are three thousand feet above the sea-level. The chestnut-browns and reds have given place to the dappled blue and grey of rock and lichen, and you are in the home of the Ptarmigan. Mark his plumage at this time of year as he flits from behind a rock at your feet. You might almost fancy that one of the mottled stones has taken wing. Visit the same mountain in November when the snow lies deep, and marvel at the glorious power which has transformed the Ptarmigan in this short time, and clothed him from head to foot in soft warm feathers, which your eye can hardly distinguish from the snow itself. Indeed, wherever we turn the same great principle of nature meets us, in the insect world, among fishes and reptiles, and throughout creation. No instance is more familiar than the brown hare crouching in the fallow, contrasted with his cousin the "blue" hare, among the grey rocks, or with the same in winter in his snow-white dress.

Attractive as the Pheasant kind are on account of their elegant forms and beautiful plumage, they inspire us with greater admiration when we regard what may be called their moral qualities. Even in the domestic state they lose none of their natural chivalry, and they are conspicuous for their devotion to their young and for the skill and courage which they exert in protecting them from their numerous enemies. Look at an old hen when a hawk is hovering above and threatening her brood. See how she will buffet a suspicious-looking cat or dog. Watch the self-denial with

THE PIN-TAILED SAND-GROUSE.

which she almost starves herself for the intense delight of showing her little ones the titbits. Even as a foster-mother she shows the same virtues, and lavishes as much fondness and tender anxiety on her truant little Pheasants or venturesome ducklings as if they were her own offspring.

One cannot wonder that parents of the Pheasant kind should show such affection for their young. A yellow duckling is—a little duck, a kitten is an endearing playfellow, a lamb, a litter of fox-cubs, are very pretty things in their way; but no one

can watch the soft compact little persons of a brood of Partridges or Quail days old without feeling that they are the most engaging pets in the world. at the nimble movements and characteristic ways of the little group, reme that they are only three days old, and you must wonder at the quaint indep with which they pick up their living and provide their own amusements.

The courage which is shown by parent birds of the Pheasant kind, in de their young against open attack, is not more remarkable than their cleve baffling the keen scent and sharp eyes of more treacherous enemies.

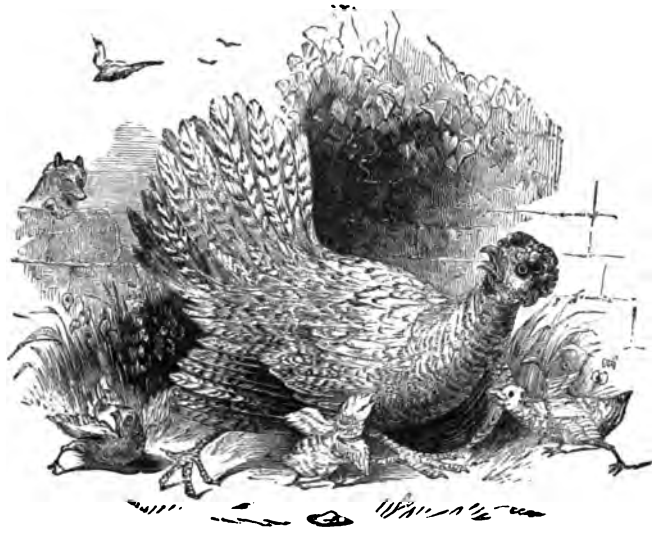
THE CAT AND THE PARTRIDGES.

The common Pheasant, whose woodland home is infested by foxes, stoats, and other vermin, who track by scent rather than by sight, has to take spe cautions. She does not approach her nest by running along the ground, fo leaving a trail which her persecutors would follow up with cruel certainty high above the cover, now gliding through the branches, on she flies until she the familiar spot, when, with folded wings, down she drops, and with scarcely alights by her nest, conscious that she is safe from pursuit. She never q simple nest without carefully covering the eggs with leaves, so deftly spre defy the sidelong glances of the prying magpie and shameless jay.

Contrast with these skilful tactics the method by which the Partridge

secure her nest and young from molestation. Dwelling in the open country, where creeping vermin are comparatively few, and keen-eyed hawks abound, and where there is no shelter to hide her flight, she will never alight close to her nest, but drop some way off, and creep there under cover of the long grass or corn.

If observed, she will run in any direction but that of the object of her care, and if she thinks her young in danger of discovery, she will try every artifice to decoy the dangerous intruder away from her precious charge. I have seen a Partridge run several hundred yards down a high road with trailing wings, as if unable to fly, to distract my attention. She allowed herself to be almost overtaken, but when she thought all danger for her young at an end, a few bold strokes of her wing carried



THE FOX AND THE CHICKENS.

her over the hedge; she dipped out of sight, and in a moment was back safe in the midst of her little ones. A similar instinct is shown by many other birds, as the red grouse, wild duck, and bustard, and notably by the common lapwing, whose plaintive cry, drooping wing, and limping gait have led most of us in childhood on many a "wild goose chase."

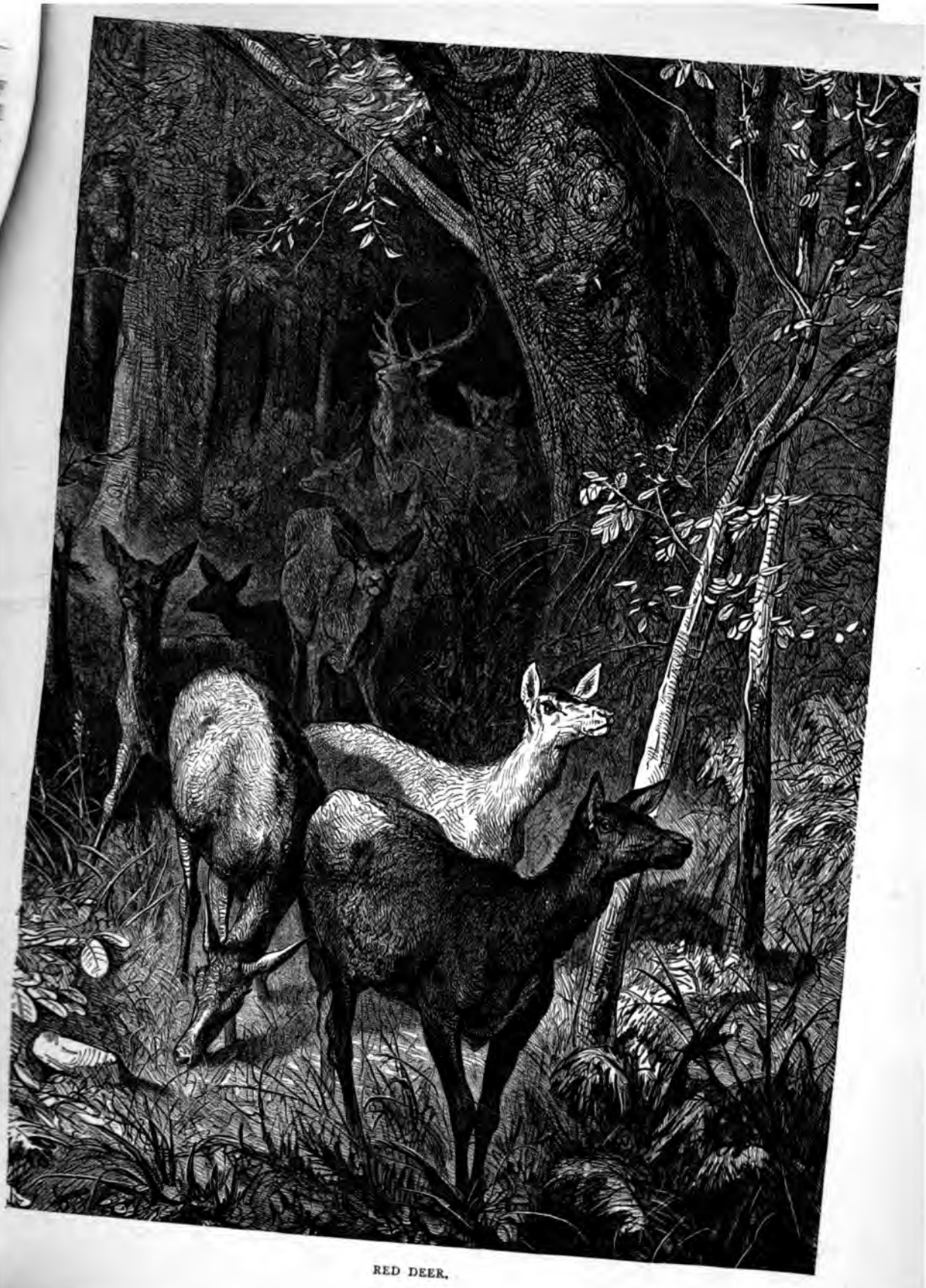
A few years ago two Partridges built their nest in a high-walled kitchen garden belonging to some friends of mine. The nest was soon discovered and often watched, and to all appearance the mother bird was content with the arrangement. One day eleven little Partridges appeared, and we promised ourselves the enjoyment of seeing them grow up. Two days later we looked for them in vain. The whole family had disappeared, but how the old birds managed to carry their nestlings over the high walls is still unexplained.

The pugnacity of the male birds of this tribe is proverbial. So reckless are they of the size or strength of an opponent, that I have known a game cock attack and kill an intruding peacock. Pheasants will answer an evening gun with a defiant challenge, and a turkey has been known to attack an express train in all the fury of righteous indignation. Of this tendency advantage has been taken by many races of men for their own amusement. Cock-fighting has been a favourite pastime among various nations, though some of the most civilized have now abandoned it. The Greeks and Romans kept Quails and Partridges for the same purpose, and would set them to fight till one gave way or fell dead.

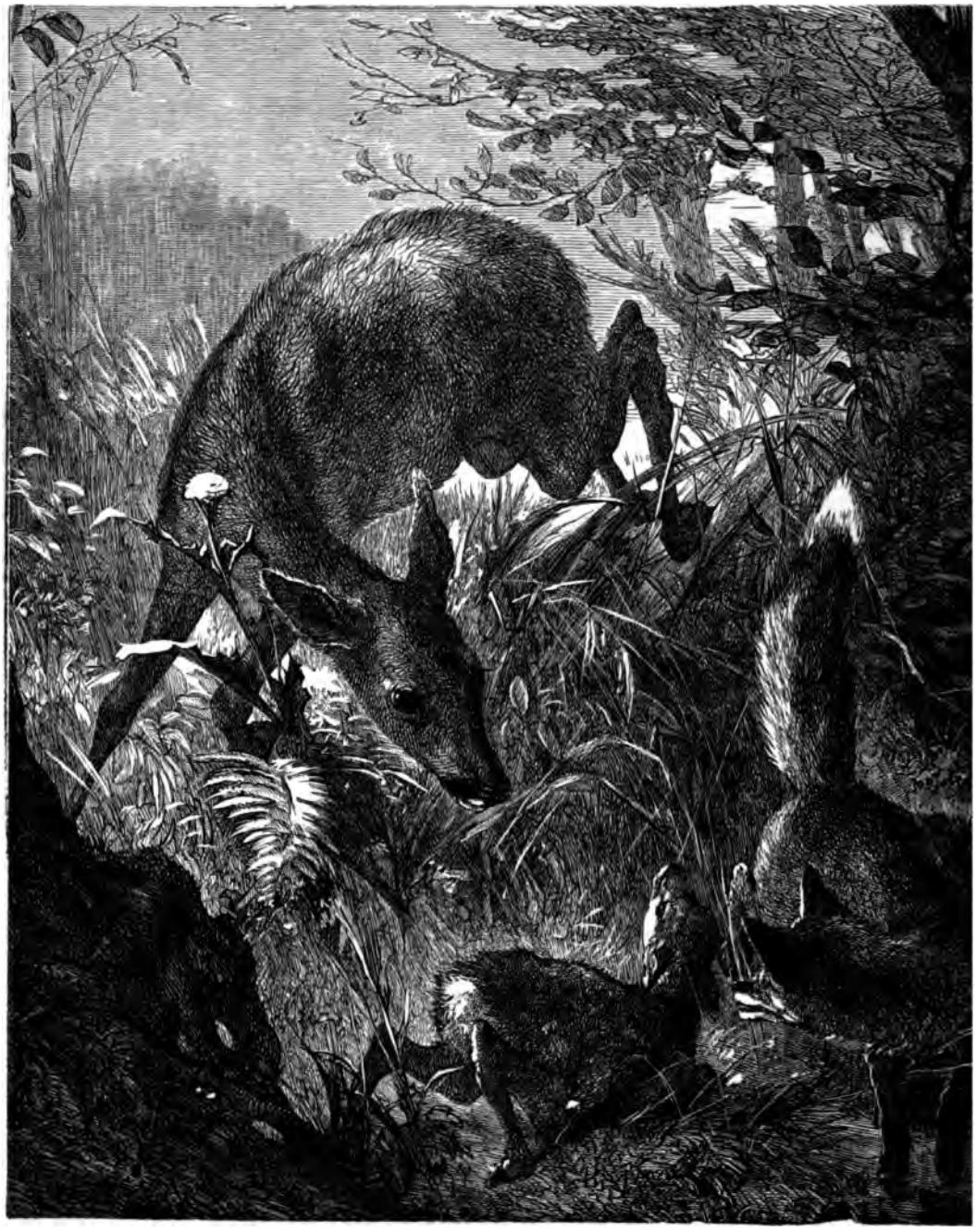
In our own country—we must own it with shame—the pastime of cock-fighting used to be one of surpassing interest, and had an extensive literature of its own. We may, however, be thankful that in our time society has strongly condemned this cruel sport, with badger-baiting, prize-fighting, and all other brutalizing exhibitions which have their only zest in the suffering of the victims and the absence of risk or effort on the part of the spectators. I wish we could stay still longer among these, the most interesting and useful tribe of all birds, who give delight to the sportsman and cheerfulness to our homes; who fed a host in the wilderness, and still furnish food to the majority of the human race; who whirr up from the barren sage brush, or start from the burning sands of Africa; who outshine the brilliancy of the tropical forest, and give a semblance of life to the eternal silence of the Arctic snows. But it is time to pass on.

THE DEER-HOUSE.

HERE we find a great variety of the larger kinds of Deer, the smaller ones being most of them in the sheds on the other side of the Gardens. The Deer is one of the most picturesque of wild animals. Three kinds still inhabit our island, and range—though in diminished numbers and within a circumscribed space—the same tracts where they roamed in the days of the Red King, under the cruel protection of the forest laws. Of all animals the Deer is the most shy and the most easily disturbed. Every living creature on the move is a sentinel to him, and the springing of a moor-fowl or the complaining note of a plover is enough to set him off in an *instant*. He is always most timid when he does not see his adversary: as soon as



RED DEER.



MOTHER TO THE RESCUE.

he has him in full view, he is as cool and circumspect as possible. Deer, like all animals who come to their full growth slowly, are very long-lived, though the Gaelic saying, "Thrice the age of a man is that of the Deer," is of course a great exaggeration. The Stags shed their horns every year. The new horns attain their full growth in three months, and appear about ten days after the old ones are shed. They are very sensitive at first, and at this time the Stags carefully avoid bringing

DRIVEN DOWN BY THE COLD.

them into collision with any other substance. When they fight they rear themselves on their hind legs and spar with their fore feet, keeping their heads back. When the horns are full grown, however, these are very formidable weapons. There is a savage conflict recorded, much like that in Sir Edwin Landseer's pictures, "Night" and "Morning," at which two large Stags entangled their horns so firmly together that they were inextricable, and the victor remained with the vanquished. In this condition they were found by the forester, who killed the survivor. The four antlers are still preserved at Gordon Castle, locked together as they were found. Each year the horns grow with an additional branch on them, till there are as many as twelve, after which they begin to deteriorate. The names given to the Stags ac-

cording to the numbers of the branches on their horns, and all about the hunting of them some hundred years ago, is told at great length in that delightful old-fashioned book, "The Children of the New Forest," which no doubt you have read. What becomes of all the antlers when they are shed is a mystery, as the number picked up in any forest bears no proportion to them, however carefully the keepers may search. It is supposed that a good many are eaten, as the hinds have been seen

TAKING SHELTER.

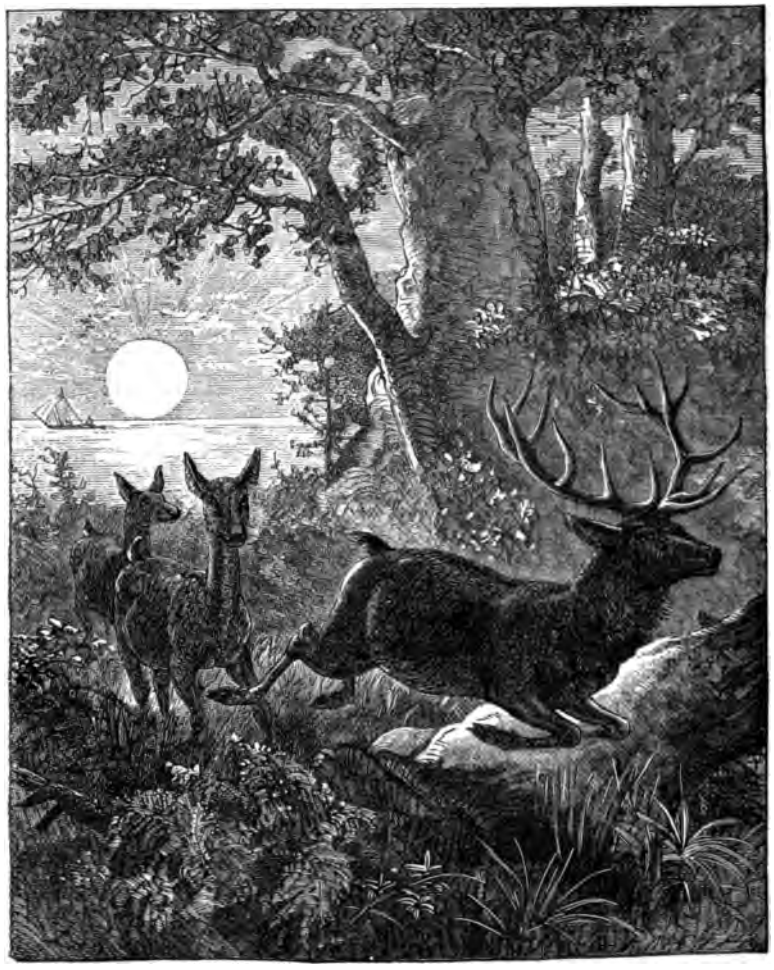
gnawing at them. It is said that a former Duke of Athol once found a dead hind which had been choked by part of a horn sticking in her throat.

The Red Deer, the largest and finest of the British species, as seen in his narrow paddock at the Zoological Gardens, looks handsome, but not dignified. Still less stately does he appear in the form in which he is best known to Londoners, when turned out before the Queen's buckhounds from a covered cart, with his horns shorn short to prevent his injuring the dogs. When he starts at his leisure to cross the country, generally with the intention of taking a quiet swim in the river, while a number of well-mounted horsemen ride up and down on the bank to wait his pleasure, he really looks a good deal like a big donkey. Indeed, it is said that on one occasion, when the hunted Stag jumped over one of the stone walls so common

THE STAG.

in Oxfordshire, a peasant at work close by looked up in surprise at the leap, a exclaimed, "Hey! hey! what ails the jubbin?" *i.e.*, "What is the matter with donkey?"

Some fifty years ago there used to be a yearly stag-hunt in Epping Forest Easter Monday, one of the royal deer being uncarted in the presence of a la



A MOONLIGHT SCAMPER.

gathering of Londoners, who called themselves sportsmen. It was a happy char when this practice was given up. The riders used to gather round the cart, a when the poor animal leapt out, tried to get a cut at him with their whips. On of the last of these occasions a blow with the stock of a heavy hunting-whip actu broke the unhappy creature's leg. Men who could look on such proceedings sport must have been either very stupid or very cruel. The Deer caught in Wind

Forest to be hunted by the Royal staghounds are better treated. They sometimes lead dogs and horsemen very fast across the country; and when at last overtaken, perhaps in a pond or barn, are not worried by the dogs, but driven quietly home in their cart, to run again another day. Still these half-tame creatures, robbed of their fine branching antlers, are not like the wild Deer which are yet found in their own solitary haunts. In Scotland there are still immense tracts of forest, over which these noble Deer, "hart, hind, and fawn," still range, as they did a thousand years ago, free, though not fearless. The deerstalker who pursues them with a rifle, intent on killing the Stags with the finest heads, finds his game as shy as they are swift and strong, and requires great skill, wariness, and endurance to ensure success. Deerstalking, now the privilege of the few, has been pronounced by competent judges to be an admirable military training, as teaching both the nature of ground and the art of approaching a post without alarming it. It was of a wild Deer in the forest of Glen Etive that Professor Wilson wrote those beautiful lines:—

> The joy of the happy, the strength of the free,
> Are shed in a garment of glory on thee.

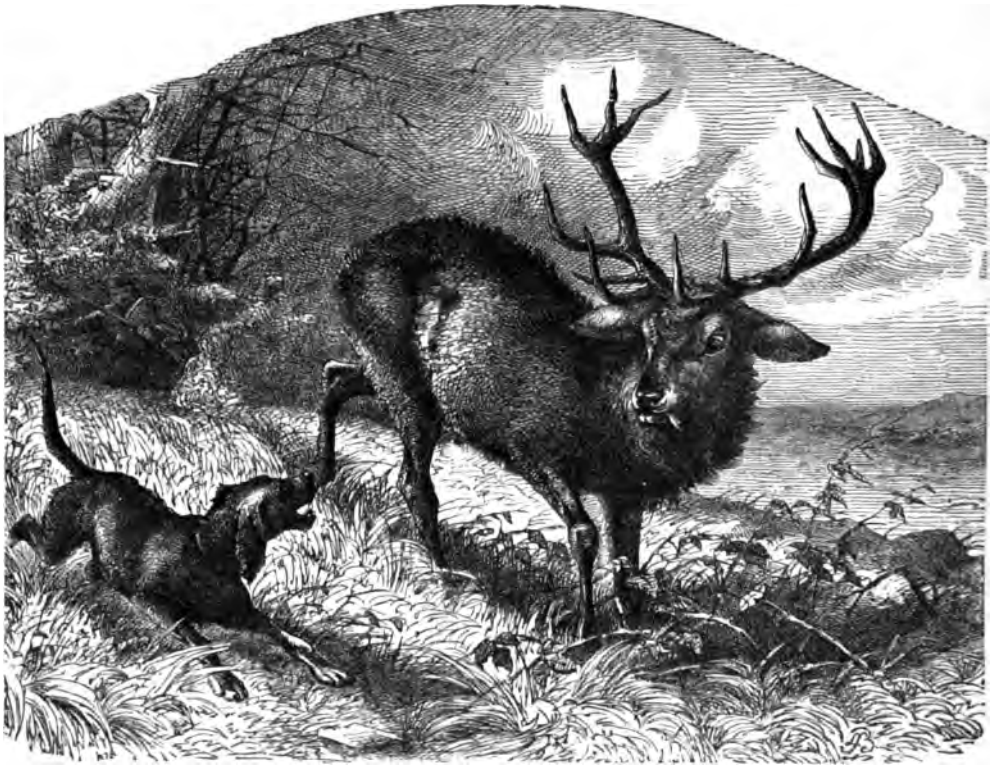
In Ireland the wild Red Deer is chiefly found among the hills that surround the beautiful Lake of Killarney; and when one of the Stags is hunted and takes to the water, the scene is very striking. The last descendants of the Red Deer whom the "Red King" used to hunt in the New Forest have been lately destroyed; and, though there are many of them in enclosed parts, the only really wild Deer now left in England are on Exmoor—a wide range of hill and woodland, which includes a large portion of Somersetshire and some nooks of Devon. There are not many of them, but though a few of the finest Stags are yearly hunted and killed in wild country where it takes a bold rider to follow them, care is taken not to reduce the herd below the present numbers. In Lord Fortescue's hall at Castle Hill may be seen a series of some two hundred heads, each bearing subscribed the record of the day when those proud antlers were pulled down, telling in Gay's words:—

> How this stag through three whole counties fled,
> What rivers swam, where bayed, and where he bled.

Shakespeare has excited great pity for and sympathy with a hunted Stag by his beautiful and tender description of one which the melancholy Jaques sees lying wounded under a tree, "left and abandoned of his velvet friends," while "the big round tears coursed one another down his innocent nose."

Those who have had no opportunity of seeing a Red Deer wild may get an excellent idea of him from Sir Edwin Landseer's pictures, from which so many fine

engravings have been made; indeed, if the people of England owed nothing to great animal painter but a familiar knowledge of the aspect, haunts, and habit this one creature, they would have abundant reason to be grateful to him. W does not remember the "Children of the Mist"?—the grey rocky pass with morning mists rolling up it, not yet pierced by the first rays of the autumn s with the half-seen forms of the Deer looming large and ghostly through t



AT BAY.

vaporous canopy? Who is not familiar with the long night struggle between t two rival Stags, each like Alexander determined to reign alone, and with the s stillness of dawning, where the mighty champions lie stiff and cold, never again waken to love or war; while the fox steals out to gaze half awe-stricken at t prostrate giants still locked in their death-struggle? One more of these pictur less generally known than the others, I cannot refrain from alluding to—a w snow-clad hill on which a solitary Stag lies dying. No other living creature within sight or hearing; his companion hinds, who clustered round him so lately almost abject admiration of his beauty and strength, have deserted him in weakness, and left him alone to die. It is a clear frosty night, and high in the de

blue sky there shines down on the dying Stag a "kind star." As you look at the star closely, you perceive faintly indicated the pitying face and overshadowing wings of a guardian angel. But one might multiply such descriptions for ever.

The Fallow Deer are the commonest in our parks and enclosures, and are very tame and friendly. In Greenwich Park they come boldly up to visitors taking refreshment, and insist on sharing their apples, biscuits, &c. In Richmond Park there are large numbers.

The third British kind, the Roe-Deer, is much smaller than the other two; it is very rare in England, but there are still plenty in the Highlands. There was once, in the British Islands, a gigantic kind of Deer resembling the Fallow Deer, the remains of which have been found in various parts of England and Ireland. It stood more than six feet high, and was nine feet long, judging from specimens of the bones that have been discovered. When I was a child, my sister and I were very fond of digging with trowels and grubbing away in an old gravel-pit where fossils of some great antediluvian animals had been discovered, in hopes that we might ourselves find something wonderful. After a great deal of fruitless digging, we really succeeded in discovering a considerable number of fossil bones of this gigantic Deer, with which we were intensely delighted. My sister was also fortunate enough to find what the learned pronounced to be a hippopotamus's tooth, which caused great excitement.

There is still a gigantic Deer in America and the North of Europe called an Elk or Moose Deer, which is sometimes confused with the extinct English creature, but is really quite a different animal. In Sweden the Elk was once used to draw sledges, but it is said that this was forbidden on account of its great strength and swiftness facilitating the escape of criminals. Certainly no such law is in force now, but they are no longer used for this purpose. Attempts have been made to train the American Elk to draw, but without success.

Only the Reindeer can be trained in this way, and he is certainly a wonderfully useful animal. Reindeers are stouter and stronger than our Stags, but not so handsome to look at. They are found in the colder parts of Europe, Asia, and America. I do not know what the Laplanders would do without these good gentle creatures; they use them not only to draw their sledges, but as an important article of food. They drink their milk, and make their skins into clothes, coverings for their tents, shoes, and all kinds of useful things. This pretty description has been written of them :—

> Their Reindeer form their riches: these their tents,
> Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
> Supply; their wholesome fare and cheerful cups.
> Obsequious to their call, the docile tribe
> Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl swift
> O'er hill and dale.

THE REINDEER.

Rich Laplanders will have as many as a thousand Reindeer in their herds. Two hundred are enough to keep a family in comfort.

In its wild state the Reindeer is a migratory animal. In the depth of winter it retires to the wooded districts, and lives upon a nourishing kind of lichen which hangs from the branches of the trees. With the approach of spring it is gradually tempted to make short trips into the open country, but returns immediately when the frost returns. In these excursions it finds a change of food in different kinds

REINDEER IN SLEDGE.

of moss, which cover the ground underneath the snow like a carpet, all of which kinds are called on this account "reindeer moss." To get at this the Reindeer scrapes away the snow with its hoofs. As soon as the snows begin to melt, and the woods are filled by the insects of spring, the Reindeer begins to fear the approaching heat, and to wish to escape from the attacks of these insects, particularly from its own particular foe, a sort of gadfly, and migrates in large herds to the sea-shore or to the mountain ridges. Here it lives partly on lichen, and partly on the leaves and young shoots of the birch and aspen, and on the hay and dry grass found in the swamps, till the cold weather drives it back to the woods again.

THE GOOSE-PONDS.

THERE are many varieties of wild Geese, found chiefly in cold Northern countries. Our common domestic Goose is a descendant of the "Grey-lag," which was once very common in the fenny counties of England; they are now becoming very scarce. They arrive in the autumn, and betake themselves to marshes, meadows, corn-fields, and turnip-fields, as far from human dwellings as possible, and feed upon whatever vegetable substances they can find, apparently preferring young shoots of corn to any other food. They are so wary and difficult to approach that, as we know, "a wild goose chase" has become a proverbial expression for a hopeless search or undertaking.

The Goose is indeed a funny mixture of wisdom and silliness. In many respects it is a remarkably sensible bird, but, not unlike its featherless betters, it is too fond of imitating the conduct of its companions, however unworthy of imitation it may be. What one Goose does you may be sure the whole flock will do. An aunt of mine had a beautiful flock of Geese, of which she was very proud. One day the leader of the party (most likely the gander) in crossing the yard, instead of walking round or flying over a deep well, of the existence of which it must have been perfectly aware, tumbled headlong in. Its cries were loud enough, you may be sure, and one would have thought the other Geese might surely take warning and avoid such a disaster themselves. Not a bit of it!—flop in went No. 2, No. 3 and so on, till all seven Geese were down the well! They were all rescued with great difficulty, brought up in a very uncomfortable condition, and recovered with the aid of brandy poured down their throats,—we will hope, sadder and wiser Geese.

A solitary Goose separated from its fellows becomes a much cleverer bird, and is often quite a companion. In a village in Germany a blind old woman was led to church every Sunday by a gander, who used to take hold of her gown with his bill. When he had conducted the old woman safely to her seat, he would go back to the churchyard and graze till the service was over. When he saw the people coming out of church, he went back to his mistress and led her safely home. One day a gentleman called at the woman's house, and finding she was gone out, told her daughter that he was surprised she should venture abroad alone. "Oh, sir," said the girl, "we are not afraid of trusting her out, for the gander is with her!"

The ancient Greeks and Romans thought a great deal of Geese. You have of course heard the story of the Geese who saved Rome from the invasion of the

THE CHILDREN OF THE COMMON.

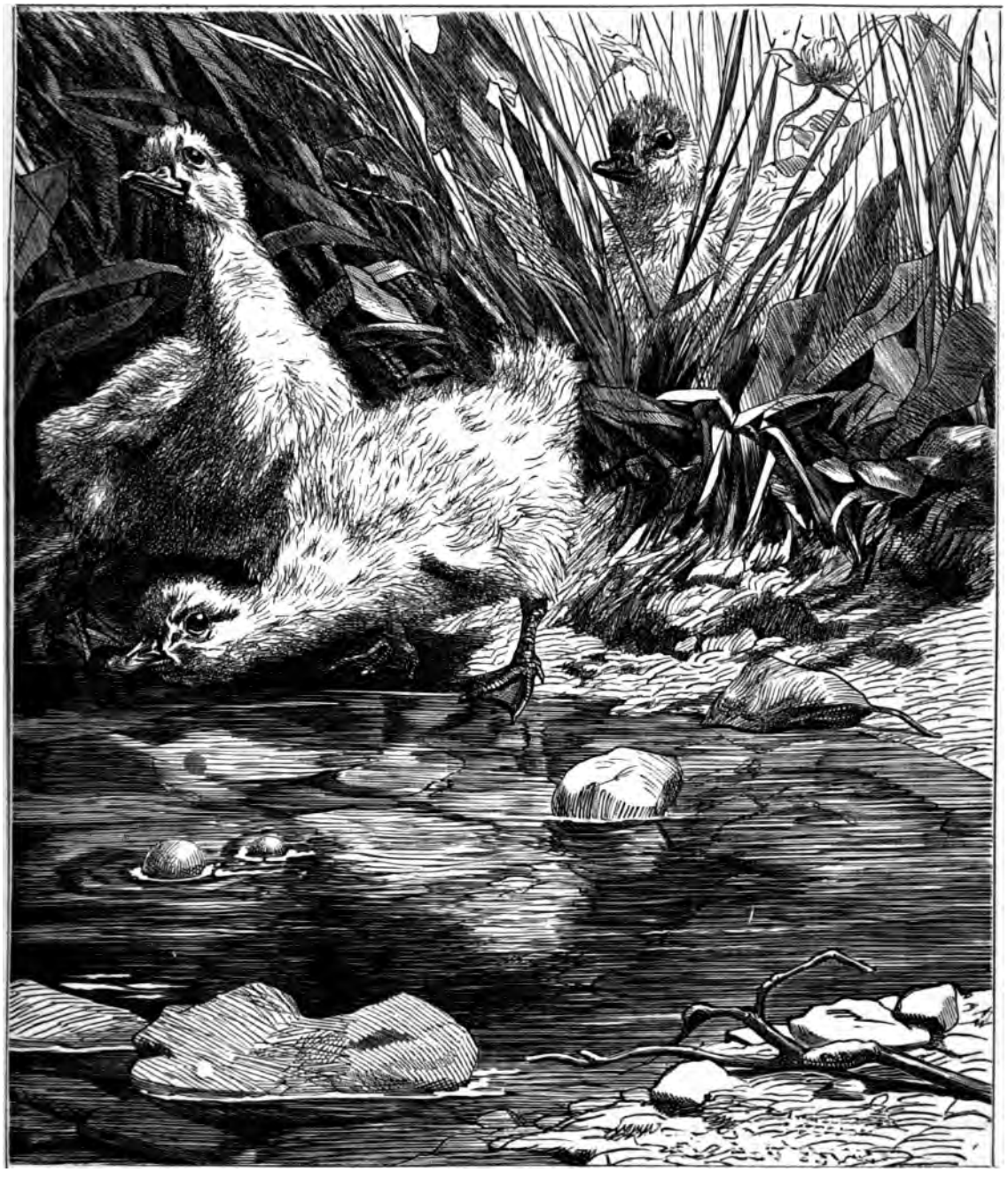
Gauls. The philosopher Lacydus had a Goose which never left him night or day, neither in public nor private, and always accompanied him to the baths. When it died, its master gave it magnificent funeral obsequies.

In Lower Normandy, opposite the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, there is a very old Castle of Pirau, with a curious Goose legend attached to it. It is thought by the peasants to have been built by fairies in very early days, before the Romans invaded the country. These fairies were the daughters of a great lord of the country, who was also a magician. When the Romans took possession of Pirau, the fairies changed themselves into wild Geese, in which form they still visit the old castle every year. I do not know whether the custom continues still, but a good many years ago the people of Pirau used to prepare straw nests in the stone niches of the old castle walls for the wild Geese, who always arrived on the night of the first of March, and flew round the castle to see by the light of the moon and the stars if their nests were ready. I am sorry to say that they used to quarrel and fight tremendously among themselves for the nests in the best situations. The strongest got possession of these, and the rest had to content themselves with the less eligible.

The Snow-Geese of Siberia are not at all like our wild Geese in one respect —they are not afraid of being caught; and the inhabitants have very little trouble in taking them, but they set about it in a funny manner. When they wish to catch them, one of the natives dresses himself up in the skin of the white reindeer; he then advances towards the flock of Geese till he thinks he is near enough, then turns and walks back into a little hut made of skins, which he has prepared for the purpose. The poor foolish birds, taking the man in the white skin for their leader, follow him (like my aunt's flock) into the hut through a small hole which he has left for the purpose; he then creeps out through a hole on the other side, which he immediately fastens up; and coming round to the side where he entered, he secures the whole innocent party.

Many species commonly classed among Ducks belong more properly to the Goose family. For instance, the Wood Duck, with its finely pencilled plumage of silver-grey, which appears in large flocks on the rivers and swamps of Australia, is really of the Goose family. You can tell the difference by the gait and carriage of the birds. However awkwardly they may manage their feet, Geese always carry their heads high and forward, in a would-be stately fashion, as if all the world were looking at them. They stoop only to feed, to hiss, or to pass under some real or fancied obstacle; for they lower their heads to go under a barn door as well as under a stile.

The Bernacle Goose from the Arctic regions, which is smaller than the common Goose, visits the north-west coasts of the British Islands in the winter. There used



THE GOSLINGS.

to be a very funny superstition about the Bernacle Goose. It was called the "Tree Goose," and people believed about two hundred years ago that the little goslings were hatched out of a kind of shell which is often found sticking to the bottoms of ships, or fragments of them, or to dead branches of trees in tidal waters.

The famous old botanist of the sixteenth century, Gerard, in his great book, "The Herbalist," gives a most curious account of this phenomenon, which he quite believed. He writes in the old spelling, "But what our eyes have seene and hands have touched we shall declare. There is a small island in Lancashire called the Pile of Foulders, wherein are found the broken pieces of old and bruised ships, some whereof have been cast thither by shipwracke, and also the trunks and bodies with the branches of old and rotten trees." He then goes on to describe the shells which grow on them, and says that inside them is something like a lace of silk finely woven together, one end of which is fastened inside the shell, like oysters or mussels, and the other end to a lump, "which in time commeth to the shape and form of a bird. When it is perfectly formed, the shell gapeth open, and the first thing that appeareth is the aforesaid lace or string; next come the legs of the bird hanging out, and as it groweth greater, it openeth the shell by degrees, till at length it all commeth forth and hangeth only by the bill. In short space after it commeth to full maturitie, and falleth into the sea, where it gathereth feathers and groweth into fowle bigger than a Mallard and lesser than a Goose."

It is a great pity that Gerard only imagined all this. One cannot picture anything more delightful than to see a tree bearing these shells, and then to watch the shells open, and delicious little downy Goslings drop out into the sea and swim away!

In olden times, when wild Geese were more plentiful than at present, their feathers were much prized for tipping the arrows of the English yeomen. The grey-goose feather has winged many a deadly shaft. In Sir Walter Scott's description of the Battle of Bannockburn, he says:—

> Forth whistling came the grey goose-wing,
> As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
> Adown December's blast.

In these days the goose-quill is still very useful to us, but for a more peaceful purpose. Lord Byron writes of it:—

> Oh, Nature's noblest gift—my grey goose-quill!
> Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,
> Torn from thy parent bird to form a pen,
> That mighty instrument of little men!

THE CATTLE-SHEDS.

Most people know something of the immense herds of cattle reared on the boundless pastures of Australia, and on the vast plains of Central and Southern America, and there are few of us, except the family of "No-eyes," who do not know by sight some at least of the numerous British breeds: the Herefords, with their long horns and ugly white faces; the Alderney and Guernsey cattle, with their small frames, fine joints, smooth skins, and large gentle eyes; the Stots or Kyloe Oxen, small, but shaggy and fierce-looking, which look so picturesque as they sniff the air on some projecting peak of a Highland hill; and the sleek maroon-coloured Devons, so often seen knee-deep in the luxuriant meadow-grass of their own beautiful county. But there were cattle running wild in Britain long before these beautiful varieties were produced, and some of this original race still remain in our island.

They are handsome creatures enough, their colour a sort of creamy white, with black muzzles and black tips to their horns, middle-sized, and with somewhat rough coats. The Dukes of Devonshire and of Northumberland are said to have a few, but the pure breed is only to be seen in its perfection in Chillingham Park, belonging to the Earl of Tankerville, whose son, by the way, was once nearly killed by them. They are very wild and shy, often shifting their ground in a body on a change of wind, and continually on the watch that no one may approach them unobserved. Occasionally they show themselves very fierce, and charge an intruder with great fury, and it is particularly unsafe to bring a dog near the ground where they are feeding. Even the keepers, who from time to time have to kill one of the bulls, must be very cautious in getting within rifle-shot of the herd. They must approach them against the wind, as deerstalkers do, for their scent is very keen, and must take advantage of every bush, tree, or hillock, to keep out of their sight.

Another native wild breed, totally distinct from the Chillingham cattle, may still be seen in the extreme part of Lyme Hall, Cheshire. These are smaller, sleeker, and more graceful animals, with limbs almost like a deer, and of a uniform red colour; but they resemble those already described in being swift, shy, and watchful, and dangerous if suddenly approached.

But thousands of years before the time at which English history begins, there was a yet more ancient breed of cattle, who were hunted by the then savage inhabitants. In a museum at Cambridge you may see the skull of one of these, with

THE ANCIENT ENGLISH BREED.

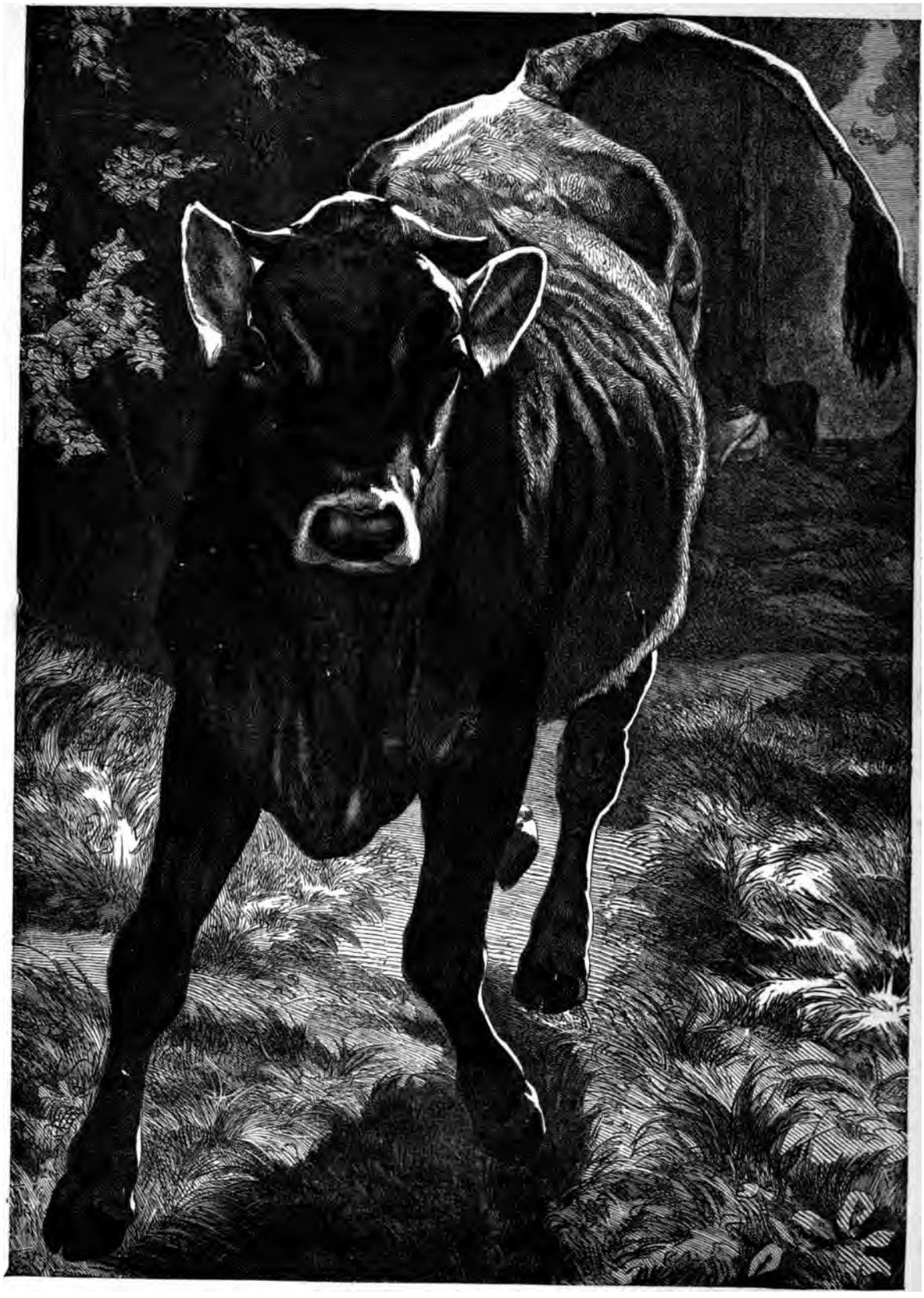
the flint weapon by which it was killed yet fixed in the cleft forehead. He must have been a strong and bold man who struck the creature down.

Domestic Cows are very comfortable, gentle creatures, and often become much attached to their owners. I know a gentleman in a suburb of London, where one does not expect to see such rural sights, whose pretty Alderney Cows come running to the fence to greet him, and take bits of biscuit from his hand as gently as a deer would do. He is very particular to feed them in order, according to their respective ages, an arrangement they seem quite to understand.

One would not give a Cow credit for being very sensitive, but it seems they have their feelings like their two-legged superiors on certain points, for I heard lately a very funny story of a Cow's pride. Some ladies staying in a country house happened one day to be passing the cow-house just at the time when the dairymaid was driving home the Cows to be milked. They all passed in quietly enough, with the exception of one, which stood lowing at the door and resisted every effort of the dairymaid to induce her to enter. When the ladies asked the maid the reason of the Cow's behaviour, she declared it was nothing but pride; and when they expressed surprise at this, she explained that whenever any other of the Cows happened to get into the cow-house before this particular one, she would seem quite affronted, and would not enter at all unless the others were turned out again and she had an opportunity of walking in before them. This statement excited the ladies' curiosity, and they begged the dairymaid to redouble her efforts to get the Cow in; on which she chased the animal through every corner of the yard, but without success, until she at last desisted for want of breath, declaring that there was nothing to be done but to turn out the other Cows. No sooner were the others driven out than in walked the gratified Cow with a stately air, her more humble-minded companions following meekly in her train. It is a curious confirmation of this story, though one quite unknown to the dairymaid who noticed the Cow's pride, that in wild herds one Cow always takes the lead, and if any of the others attempt to pass her, she will attack it with her horns and hoofs. The poet Blomfield notices this pride of place in speaking of Cows coming at the call of the cowboy:—

> The strong press on, the weak by turns succeed,
> And one superior always takes the lead;
> With jealous pride her station is maintained,
> For many a broil that post of honour gained.

In Switzerland there is a very fine breed of cattle, and they are made a great deal of and tended with the utmost care. The herdsmen tie bells round the necks of some of them, so that if they stray among the hills and mountains, the tinkle,



OUT FOR A SCAMPER.

which is heard at a great distance in those lofty and silent regions, may guide the search for them. The Cows which are accustomed to carry the bells grow very fond of the sound and proud of the distinction, and if they misbehave, their bells are taken from them, and they become quite sulky and melancholy!

The Yak is the domestic Bull of Thibet, where it is found both wild and tame, but generally tamed. It is about the size of an English Bull, but is covered with long glossy hair, which extends over its whole body except the head and legs, and sometimes the hair is so long as to trail on the ground. The neck is short and arched, and, as in the Brahminee Bull of Hindostan, there is a high hump between the shoulders. This is coated with a profusion of short curly hair, extremely soft, and of quite a different texture from that which covers the rest of the body. This soft fur, for such it really is, overspreads the shoulders, and continues, though in less profusion, along the back as far as the root of the tail, which is composed of an immense tuft of long bright hair, which almost sweeps the ground. The Yak's tail is an indispensable appendage to the costume of an Eastern Court. It is used throughout India, and, when it cannot be obtained in sufficient quantities to answer the demand, it is very successfully imitated by the cunning Eastern workmen. The tails are made into "chowries," a sort of whisk employed to keep off flies and mosquitoes. The Tartars have large herds of these creatures. They live a great deal on their milk, and use them as beasts of burden.

THE THREE-ISLAND POND.

This pond, which it has been found necessary to divide into three compartments in order to keep the peace among the various inhabitants, is large enough to contain three islands, on which many of the birds breed. For many years one of these was the only breeding-place in Europe of the black-necked Swan of South America, but it has lately become common in collections of foreign water-fowl.

Let us now take a special look at the Swans—those most beautiful and stately birds, who really deserve to be queens among their kind as much as peacocks. With our own fair domesticated Swan we are all familiar from childhood. The Swans in the parks seem the special property of London children.

> Witness, O Serpentine,
> Thy fair though formal banks, where hundred hands
> Of town-bred infants, panting still for sights
> And sounds of Nature, feed thy score of swans—

to quote from a pretty little poem about Swans and children.

We cannot imagine old Father Thames without the ornament of these graceful birds floating lazily about: sometimes coming boldly to the most frequented parts of the river and courting notice, and sometimes lurking in secluded spots among the willows, where the water-lilies have been left undisturbed. Swans with young ones—cygnets as they are called—are very bold birds. The father Swan will follow a boat, ruffling his feathers and swelling and puffing himself along; and if any of the party in the boat irritate him by screaming or brandishing an oar, he will

ON THE THAMES.

often attack them in a most spirited manner, and give formidable blows with his beak and wings.

The Thames Swans are the property of the Queen and of the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies. Those belonging to the Dyers have a notch, or, as it is called, a nick on one bill. Those of the Vintners have a notch on each side. All not marked in this way, and they are, I am glad to say (for it must be very unpleasant to have one's bill nicked), by far the largest number, belong to the Queen. Early in August every year the Swan-markers of the Crown and of the two companies come up the river in a gaily decorated barge, and all the cygnets advanced enough in age are

d marked. In ancient days (for this is a very old custom indeed) these to be called Swan-uppers, which word has long been corrupted into pers. Great excitement attends these ceremonies, which I well remember

For a long time the taste of a pine-apple was inseparably connected nd with the Swan-hoppers, to whom I imagined the fruit belonged in :icular and mysterious manner. This was because I was taken as a very d down to the river by my nurse, who somehow made friends with the)pers, the result of which acquaintance was a piece of this strange new :nted to me. I am now puzzled to explain how these gentlemen came to luxuries on board their barge.

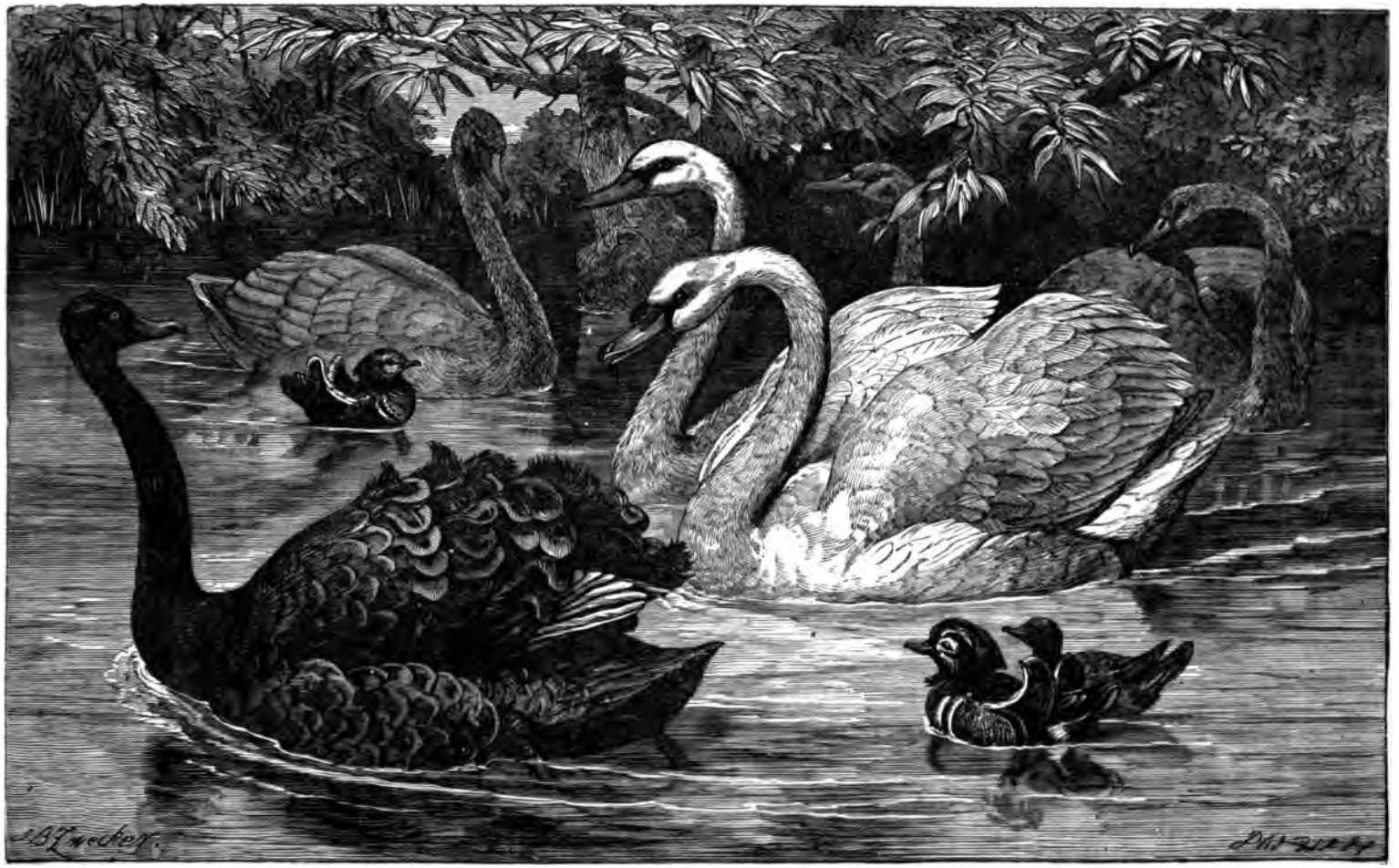
y Swan makes herself a stately nest, suited to her dignity, among reeds s, of a pile of sticks, flags, and rushes, where her lord attends her most y. She lays six or eight eggs, from which appear, in course of time, the gnets, or ugly ducks, as Hans Andersen has taught us to call them. No particular young Swan looked awkward and ungainly among its foster-nd sisters, the little yellow ducklings; but with their own proper mothers, own river, the little brown things do not look at all ugly. When half-ey have certainly rather a shy, awkward appearance; they do not get their nage till the beginning of the third year.

emans very appropriately introduces the Swan in her description of "The omes of England"—

> The deer across their greensward bound,
> Through shade and sunny gleam,
> And the Swan glides past them with the sound
> Of some rejoicing stream.

y to say that I once saw these stately birds treated with great indignity.)rrid boys"—I am afraid that they were, in fact, young men—caught two hich were swimming peacefully in our river, and harnessed them to a sort)ore triumphal car. One of the party sat in it, and the rest induced the ns to drag him along by shouting at them. They declared that it was an g experiment in natural history, to test the truth of the immense physical ributed to the Swan. Nothing could look more awkward and uncomfort- the poor Swans in the capacity of steeds on dry land, though they might ave dragged a little boat on the river with grace; and the ladies who were d to see and admire the grand procession soon procured their release.

wans visit the north of England and Scotland in the winter, and a flight s a most interesting and beautiful sight. The most common kind is the



IN ST. JAMES'S PARK.

"Hooper," which owes its name to its powerful voice. It is not quite so graceful as the tame Swan (or Mute Swan, as it is called, on account of its comparatively feeble cry), but is much more active on land, and would no doubt have drawn the chariot I mentioned in a more business-like manner.

In olden times a "Black Swan" used to be considered a fabulous bird. The idea of a Swan was so inseparably connected with beautiful snowy plumage, that a *black* Swan seemed like a contradiction in terms; but all the while, in that great undiscovered country, Australia, these magnificent birds, with their glossy raven plumes, were reigning supreme, the only representatives of their stately race. They are certainly as lovely and elegant in their way as the European white Swans. They are more slenderly made, their feathers have a beautiful curl in them, and their rose-coloured bills contrast most strikingly with their dark plumage. It is curious that the down on their breasts, which is as thick as that of our tame Swans, is also as white. When the black plumes which grow over and through it are removed, nothing can be whiter and softer. In the moulting seasons these birds are unable to fly, and become very helpless; they are then easily hunted down in boats, and either fattened for the table or kept for ornamental waters. They very soon become tame, and are not apt to fly away, even when their wings are unclipped. Our English Swans were evidently of opinion that a black Swan was an anomaly, and had no right to exist, for the first that was brought to St. James's Park was immediately killed by them. They have long since become reconciled, however, to the strange visitors, and all float together in beautiful contrast happily enough.

An elderly relation has just given me an account of a visit which she remembers, with great interest, to Lord Ilchester's swannery on the Dorsetshire coast, fifty years ago. There were at one time as many as three or four thousand Swans there; though there are always great difficulties attending the rearing of the cygnets. The father Swans are so dreadfully pugnacious, that it is necessary to give every pair a little creek or corner to themselves. The great delight of the wicked old birds is to hold their neighbours' children under the water till they are drowned! The hooded crows are also terrible enemies to the swannery, and destroy numbers of eggs and young birds; and, at the time I speak of, the keeper used to be provided with little swivel guns to shoot them with. Ignorant sportsmen often mistake these tame birds for the Hooper Swan, and shoot them with great triumph as they stray along the coast.

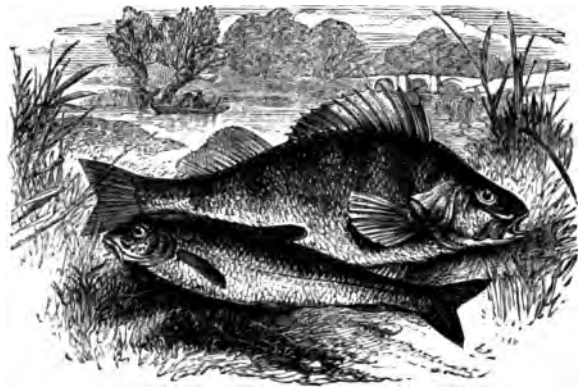
There seems no clue to be found for the origin of the old superstition that Swans sing when they are dying, but it was a poetically-conceived idea, and inspired Tennyson's exquisite little poem, "The Dying Swan," the last lines of which are music in themselves:—

The wild Swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear;
And floating athwart the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flowed forth on a carol free and bold,
As when a mighty people rejoice,
With shawms and with cymbals and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
Through the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star;
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

THE FISH-HOUSE.

THE fresh-water fish in the tanks at the Gardens do not generally show to great advantage, and visitors are not much inclined to notice creatures which have nothing to say for themselves. Yet many of them are exceedingly beautiful, and their habits curious and interesting. As regards beauty, we are most of us familiar with the bright colours of the Gold and Silver-Fish—a sort of Carp, originally brought from China, but now common throughout England. Yet I think that some of our native fish are really handsomer. Look at a Salmon, in his bright silver armour, or a Trout, with his richly-tinted fins and spotted sides, or a Perch, with his zebra-like black stripes and vermilion fins. But there is one fresh-water fish more beautiful than any of these, which you probably have never seen alive; I mean the Red Char. This is a fish found in some of our cold mountain lakes, and belonging to the same family as the Salmon and Trout. In shape it is most elegant, formed something like the Trout, but smaller in the head and slenderer above the tail. But its colouring is quite lovely—purple stars on a rose-coloured ground. Again, what curious habits, what wonderful provisions of Nature, we may notice among the fish that people our streams and pools! Look at the little Stickleback, watching

the nest of weed, out of which its young are to be hatched, as carefully as parent birds do their brood. A hen partridge does not ruffle her feathers more boldly in the face of the dog who approaches her nestlings than this tiny creature, scarcely two inches in length, flies at the larger fish which seem to threaten its eggs with danger. Think of the strong instinct which leads migratory fish like the Salmon and Sea-Trout over rocks and weirs, through shallows and rapids, for perhaps a hundred miles, up to the cool streams where they can form their spawning-beds and bury their eggs safely, to be hatched as the spring comes on. Look at the baby fish when first hatched, each with a sack behind like the yolk of a tiny egg, to nourish it till it has grown strong enough to swim about and seek its own food. Observe the wonderful protection given to some species by the way in which their colour



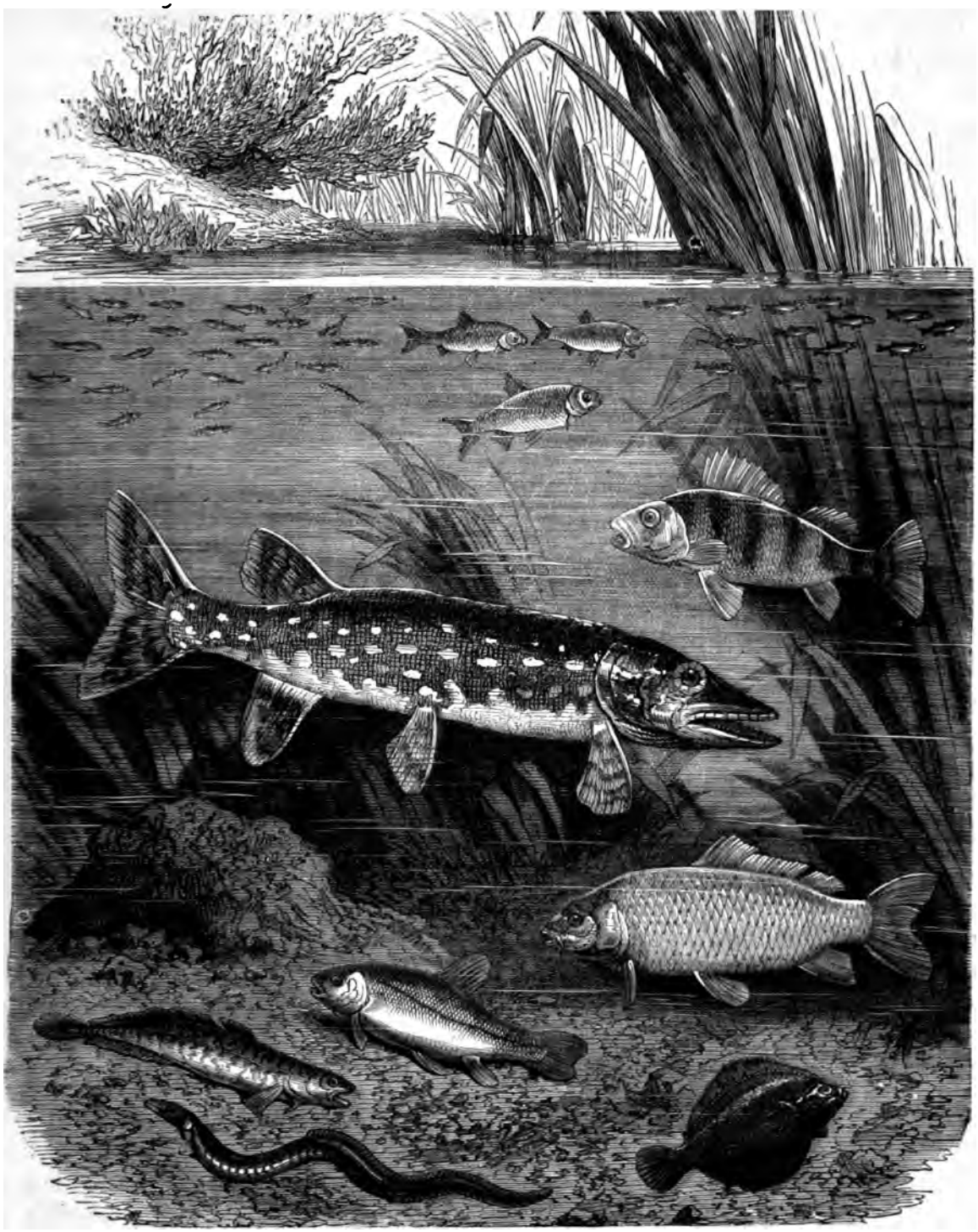
GUDGEON AND PERCH.

suits itself to the ground over which they move. The back of the Flounder—our only fresh-water species of flat-fish—is coloured so exactly like the muddy sand over which it slips along, that only a very quick eye can distinguish it even when in motion. The little Stone-Loach, or "Beardie," is mottled just like the pebbly gravel on which it lies. The Trout, as I have been assured by a very experienced fly-fisher, varies in colour according to the bottom on which it lies and the quantity of light which reaches it. Those that lie under sunken logs or hollow banks take a dull blackish tint; those that lie on white sand in a sparkling shallow are light-tinted and silvery; while others off a red gravel have a ruddy golden hue. We think fish stupid because they are mute, but if ever you keep an aquarium—and I know few things more interesting—you will be struck by the variety of character shown not only by different species of fish, but even by different fish of the same species. Perch and Sticklebacks are generally, I think, the boldest; but I have known a Loach so tame that he would actually take food out of my uncle's mouth.

Perhaps I ought to have begun by telling you that fresh-water fish are divided into two great "Orders"—the Spiny-Finned and the Soft-Finned Fishes. Of the former there are comparatively few in fresh water, the handsome courageous Perch being the only one of any value. Young anglers, however, are sometimes very proud of catching the "Pope" or "Polly Ruffle"—a droll little fish, bristling all over with spiny fins, so that you can hardly lay hold of him without pricking your fingers. In shape he is very like the Perch, but without his brilliant colours. Then there is the "Bull-head" or "Miller's Thumb," an ugly, greedy little fellow, with a thorny back, an enormous mouth, and goggle eyes turned upwards, who lurks among big stones in our clear brooks. There are lastly several species of Stickle-backs, or Sticklebags, as I think they ought to be called, being mere bags of bones and prickles, the spiniest of all our spiny fishes. Small as these are, they multiply so fast that they have been caught in sufficient quantities to be used for manuring land, and the men who netted them made good wages by selling them at a half-penny a bushel. Poor little fellows!

Of soft-finned fish there are a great many more kinds in our lakes, rivers, and ponds. The most important of the families in which these are classed are the Salmon family and the Carp family. To the former belong three species, that are bred in our rivers, but, when old enough for a long voyage, put on a sort of silvery travelling coat and move slowly down to the sea, where they thrive wonderfully, growing more in a few weeks than they had done in fifteen months or even two years of fresh water. These species are the Salmon, the largest and most valuable frequently weighing more than fifty pounds; the Sea-Trout, a smaller fish, but excellent for the table; and the strong coarse Bull-Trout. But there are also several species which do not migrate: the common Trout, found in so many of our lakes and rivers; the great Lake-Trout, or *Salmo ferox*, found in some of the large deep lakes; the Char; and the Grayling. All these naturally belong either to clear streams, or to pools fed by some spring or brook; the Trout, however, will sometimes thrive in a mill-pond if put into it young. Of the Carp family there are a great many species, some of which, like the Chub, Dace, and Bleak, only live in running water, while others, like the Carp, Tench, Roach, and Rudd, seem to live equally well in streams or ponds, although they are the best eating when they come from a clear river.

The Carp himself, who gives name to this family of fishes, is a fine fellow to look at, with a very broad side, a bright golden eye, and gilded scales sometimes as big as a shilling. Carp live to a great age, and never seem to cease growing as long as they get plenty to eat, though they lose their bright colours. The oldest and biggest I have ever heard of were in a large ornamental piece of water at Kingston



FRESH-WATER FISH.

House, near Dorchester. About fifty of these, already very large, had been turned into this water a hundred and ten years before the time at which my father saw them there—about the year 1833. They were then reduced to about thirty, and weighed from thirty to forty pounds, looking as they rolled about more like black pigs than fish. There could be no mistake about their age and history, for not only had the then owner of Kingston House, then aged eighty-four, known them from his childhood, but his father, who was about twelve years old when the Carp were turned out, had told him of their introduction, and watched their growth.

This family of fishes, though a very large one and found in all kinds of waters, is not an interesting one; most of the species feed near the bottom, and are rarely seen except when basking on a warm day. The Dace, however, is a lively fellow, and feeds at the surface much like the Trout. Livelier still is the little silvery Bleak, shoals of which may be seen jumping at the flies in every rapid and eddy of the Thames. Nothing can be more brilliant than the scales of these little fish, and they used to be killed in great numbers in order to make artificial pearls of their silver coats. But I believe this manufacture has now ceased, and I am glad it is so, for many thousands of these bright happy creatures were killed to get a single pound weight of scales.

There is only one more fresh-water fish particularly worth mentioning—the Pike. He is chiefly remarkable for his size, fierceness, and extreme voracity. The largest I ever knew of was caught in a large pool at Fillingham Castle in Lincolnshire, and weighed forty-seven pounds—about as much as ten full-grown rabbits! But I believe much larger have been caught in some of the great Scotch and Irish lakes. Indeed, the only hindrance to the growth of these greedy creatures lies in the want of food; it seems as if they never had enough. They do not like to attack a big Perch on account of his spiny fins, and it is said they will not swallow a Tench, possibly on account of his shiny skin; but they will seize every other kind of fish, small or large, and not fish only, but frogs, water-rats, and water-fowl of various kinds. Pike have no mercy on each other, and it frequently happens that one is choked in the attempt to swallow another nearly as big as himself. And it is quite a common occurrence to find one quite helpless from having taken in a mouthful so large that he cannot swallow it, while his sharp curved teeth prevent his throwing it up again. My father tells me that he has several times landed a pike in this condition by hooking him outside, and that the fish has not made the slightest struggle. He took one of ten pounds weight by this means in the Thames which had another of two pounds in its gullet, and till it was lifted into the boat he could not tell whether it was alive or dead. Another which he foul-hooked in a Dorsetshire pool was barely alive, and must ultimately have been choked. It weighed only five pounds,

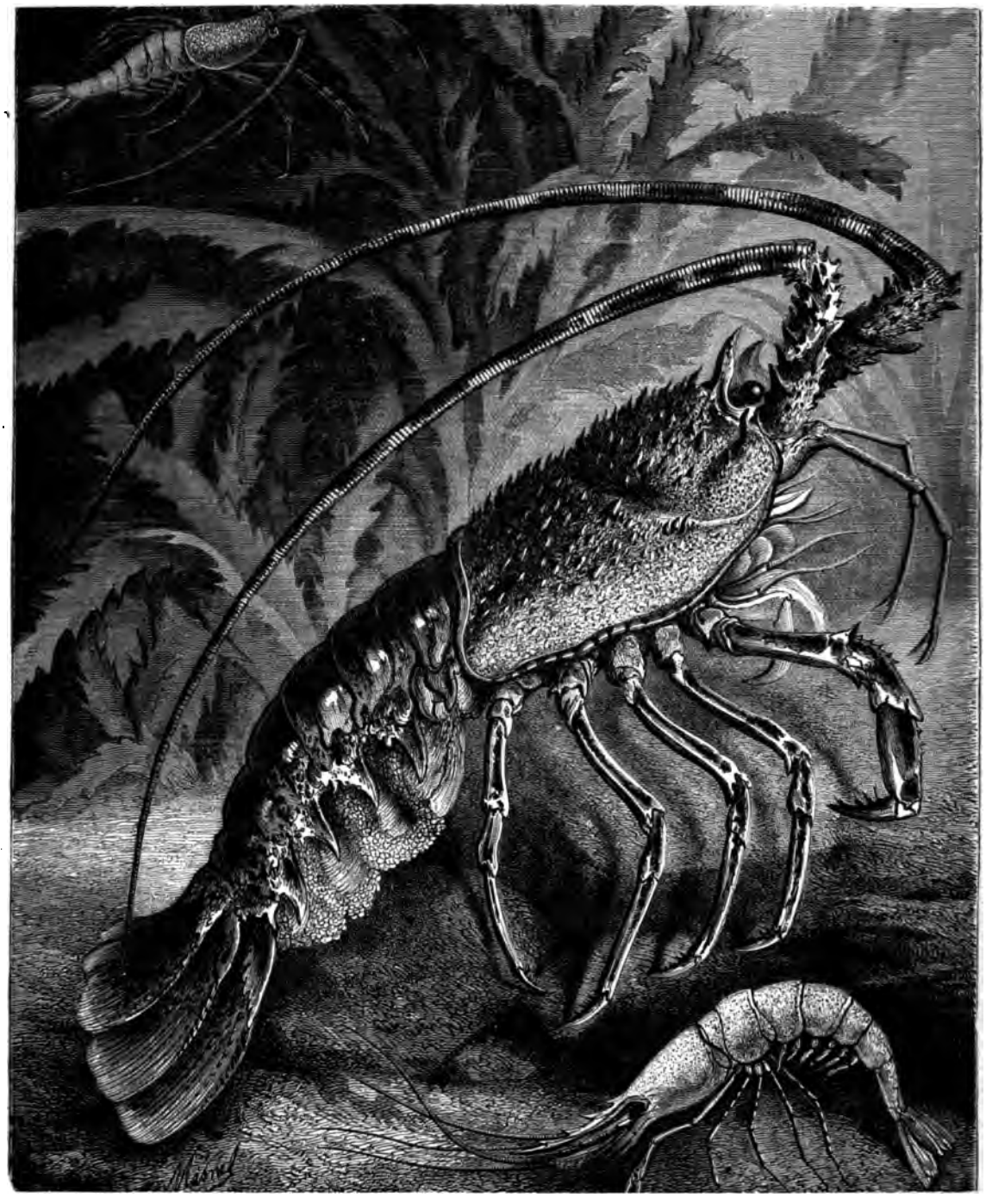
and yet had seized and half-swallowed a full-grown water-hen! Pike will frequently take a fish which the angler has hooked, and carry it away by force; though it occasionally happens that they get caught in the attempt.

We have stayed a long time in the fresh-water side of the Fish-House, and must now pay a visit to their salt-water cousins opposite, some of which are most curious and interesting. Amongst the most amusing of the sea-creatures to watch are the Lobsters and Crabs, there is something so comically deliberate in their movements. I have seen a Crab take five minutes to decide whether he should scratch his face or not, and change his mind just as his claw was arriving at the right spot! The Lobsters step along the sandy bottom in a very cautious, gingerly manner, holding up their tails like an old lady walking in a muddy street and carrying the train of her gown very carefully.

Thinking about Lobsters reminds me of a funny story I heard the other day about an Australian lady, who was certainly not a naturalist. She had employed a celebrated colonial artist to paint her a picture to hang in her drawing-room. It was a sea-piece, with a stormy headland and a wild sky. The lady was very much pleased with it at first, but after a time she began to think it was rather a gloomy picture, all greys and dull blues, and that she would like a little bit of bright colour in the foreground; but what could be done? Red flowers do not grow upon the beach! Suddenly she had a happy thought. Lobsters! What could be more appropriate? No sooner said than done. This clever lady painted in among the stones, very neatly, some bright red Lobsters! She had certainly not studied her nursery rhymes properly as a child, or she would have known, as we do, that

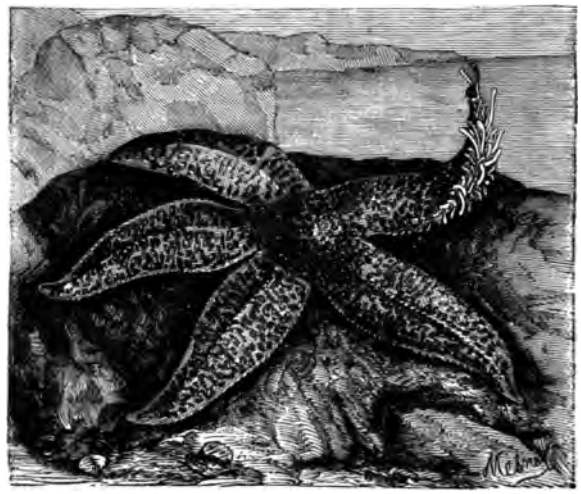
A Lobster's black; when boiled, he's red.

The King Crab is one of the funniest of these creatures ("crustaceans," as they are called) in his personal appearance: his great grey shell looks like a gigantic mushroom, or a permanent umbrella, under which he runs about sideways in a most laughable way. Little Hermit-Crabs are to be found in most of the tanks, as they are very useful in an aquarium, clearing out any rubbish that might injure the water or make the more delicate fishes sick. Their habits are very peculiar: they take possession of empty shells vacated by other people, which they exchange for larger ones as their growth requires. They are very pugnacious little fellows, and two will often fight fiercely for a desirable shell to which each has taken a fancy. Sometimes, too, one will turn another out, after he has been comfortably established for a long time, by surprising him very suddenly. Unamiable and unsociable with each other, however, Hermit-Crabs appear to have one soft corner in their hearts. There is a certain kind of sea-anemone which grows on their shells, and to this little companion the



THE LOBSTER.

Hermit becomes so attached that when he changes his house he carefully assists his anemone friend to move also! Nothing can be more beautiful and fairy-like than a tank filled with zoophytes, sea-anemones, corals, jelly-fish, &c. To describe the endless variety of the exquisite colours and forms of these lovely half-fish half-flower creatures would be impossible. It is like a brilliant little flower garden, with every blossom in the perfection of health and freshness, but an enchanted flower garden, for the plants use their petals like fingers and mouths, and their diet is much more substantial than dew-drops! There is a little transparent shrimp, called the Opossum Shrimp (because, like the Australian animals, it carries its young in a pouch),



A STAR-FISH.

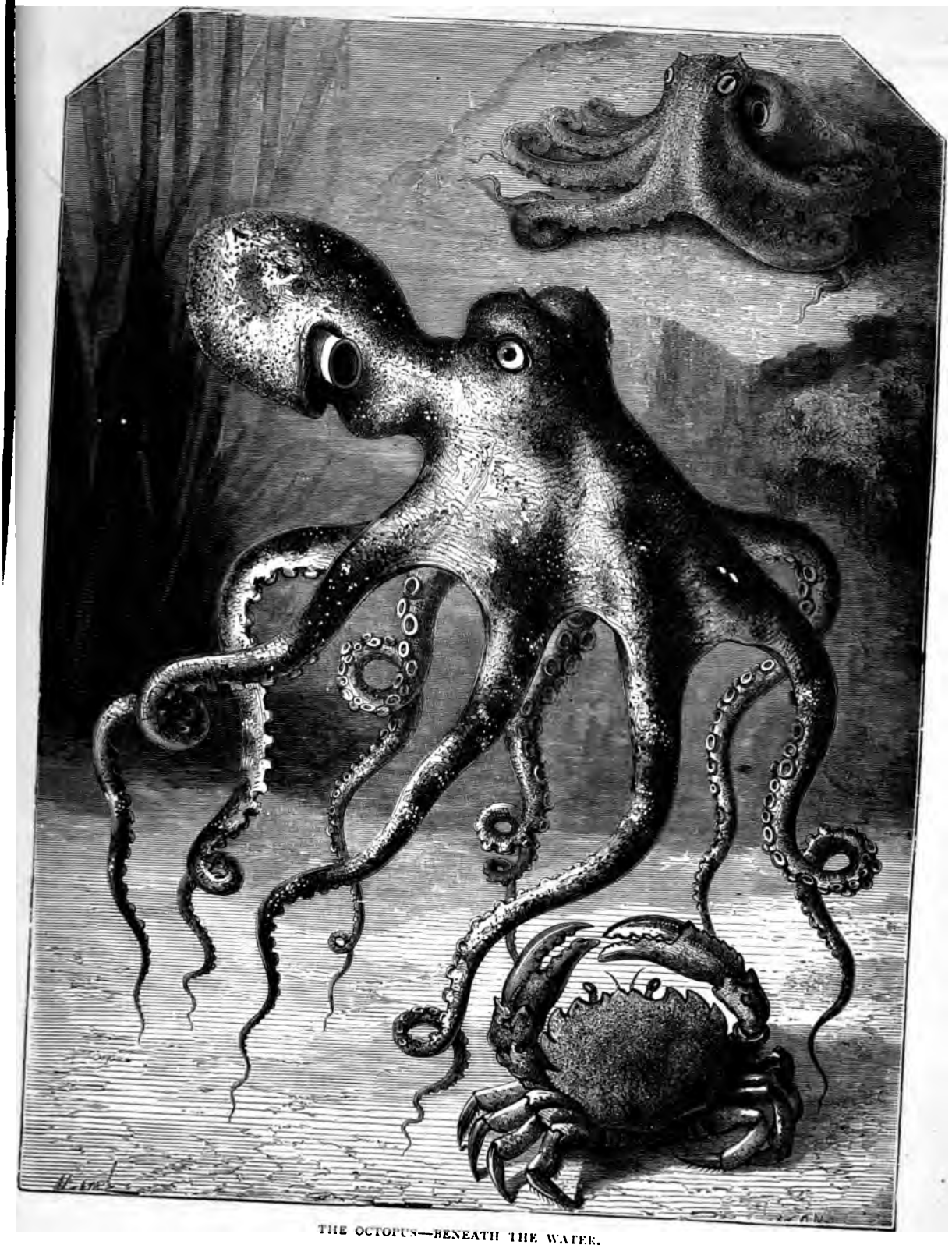
which these dainty anemones are particularly fond of, and devour in quantities, though I am sure you would never think it to look at their delicate feathery forms. Some of the larger kinds can seize and absorb Crabs and small fish. You will remember, if you have read Hans Andersen's beautiful story of "The Little Mermaid," the dreadful polypi through which she had to pass, trembling lest they should seize her in their slimy arms. I have no doubt, if there were little mermaids at the bottom of the sea, these voracious creatures would try to catch them.

The Star-Fish are endless in variety. One notices particularly among them the "Sun-star," with its brilliant colours and number of fingers; and the "Spiny-star," which is green, and wears a rosette on each arm. All the Star-Fish have irritable tempers, and this one has the funny habit, when in a rage, of flinging its arms about so violently as to separate them from its body, and away they float, to start, in course of time, a new existence on their own account.

The Sea-Horses are very funny little creatures. They look exactly like knights on a chess-board. They have prehensile tails—that is, tails by which they can cling and hang. The Sea-Horse has a very curious way of catching its prey. It glides very quietly within about half an inch of the shrimp or minute creature it wishes for, and opens its mouth suddenly and puffs out its cheeks. In rushes the water naturally, and in rushes the dinner with it, and the whole process is so rapid that one can scarcely follow it with one's eye. I do not think the Sea-Horse can be accused of greediness. He certainly does not "live to eat," but "eats to live," getting over the business as quickly as possible, instead of munching away at his leisure, as he would if he were a Land-Horse.

There is something, I think, rather unpleasant about the whole Skate tribe. When a common Skate rises through the water close to the glass, so that you can see his whole form, he is positively uncanny. You seem to see the complete outline of a land animal traced in him, something between a bat and a kitten, with a wicked little face. The "Sting-Ray," a dangerous sort of Skate found in warm latitudes, is so very disagreeable-looking that one can quite imagine him dealing his venomous blows with malice as well as to protect himself.

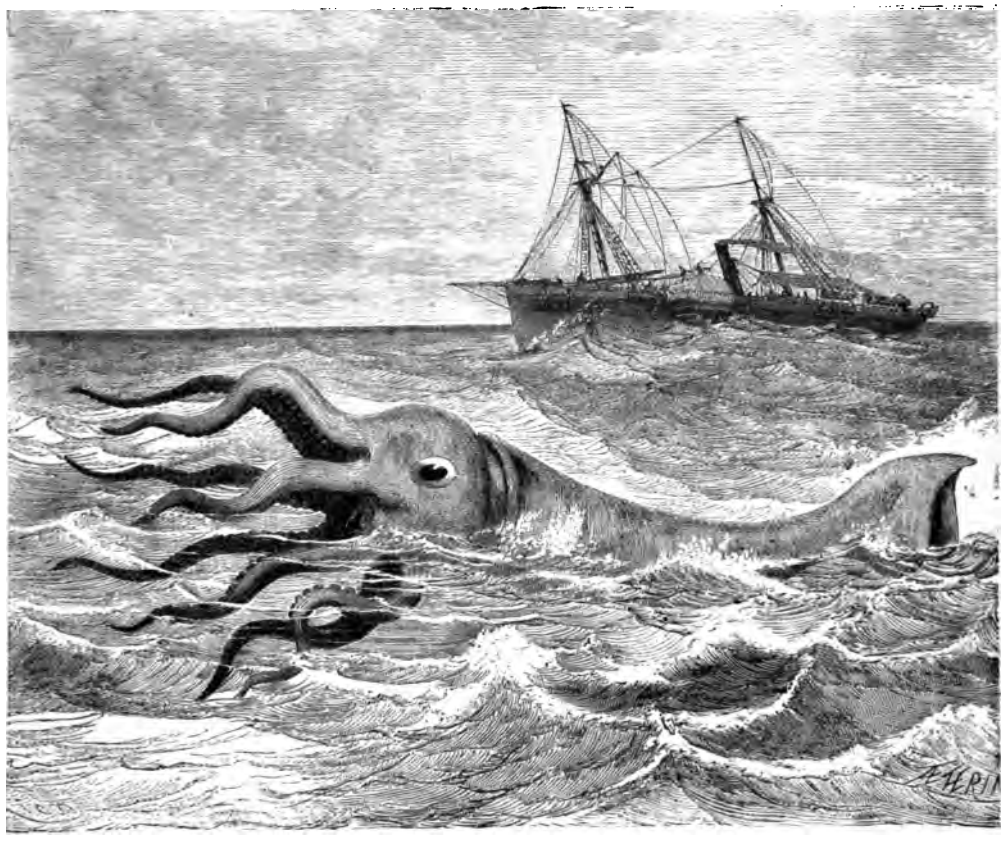
But of all the strange sea creatures, the Octopus, or eight-armed Cuttle-Fish, is perhaps the strangest. He lives at the bottom of the sea, generally under rocks. Those which are found in the British Channel are not very large, but in some warmer seas they grow to an enormous size, their arms, which they twine round their prey, being sometimes many feet in length. These, and a strong sort of parrot-shaped beak, with which they devour whatever they catch, as a hawk or vulture might do, make them formidable enemies to encounter. The general colour of an Octopus is a sort of mottled brown, but he has the curious and convenient power of changing the shade as near as possible to that of the rock to which he may be holding, so as to avoid being recognized by his prey till they are within reach of his cruel arms. The moment he begins to swim his colour becomes a dark dingy red, sometimes tending to purple. When exhausted, he turns pale, and flushes red with anger or excitement. The first Octopus which appeared at the Brighton Aquarium was caught in a lobster-pot at Eastbourne in 1872, and created great interest. Visitors crowded to look at him, though he hid himself from their curious eyes as much as possible. His end was very sad. The tank of some spotted Dog-Fishes had to be cleaned out, and as no one suspected that any harm would come of it, they were put for the time into the same tank with the Octopus. For a time they got on very comfortably together, the Octopus having made for himself a nice little grotto of live oysters to retire to when fatigued with society. One morning he was missing. It was observed at the same time that one of the Dog-Fishes looked



THE OCTOPUS—BENEATH THE WATER.

unusually large and fat, and this led to the discovery that he had swallowed the poor Octopus whole.

The Octopus can run very fast indeed on land if he has any object in doing so, and is a famous climber. At one time a number of Lump-Fish disappeared in the most mysterious manner from one of the tanks in the Aquarium; no one could imagine what became of them, and it was at last discovered that the Octopus, from



THE OCTOPUS—ON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER.

a neighbouring tank, was in the habit of leaving the water, climbing up the rocks and over the wall into the next one. Having secured and devoured a young Lump-Fish or two, he returned quietly to his own quarters. Mr. Tom Hood wrote some very funny verses about this, in which he described how the Octopus

To the lump-fish tank, as sprightly
As the Brighton coach, he'd ride;
For two passengers he nightly
Found convenient room inside.

On his feelers, long and curly,
Homeward then he gently strode;
And you'd have to get up early
To perceive him on the road.

The mother Octopus lays an immense number of eggs, and takes the greatest care of them for several weeks before they hatch, cleaning them and caressing them, and guarding them from observation or from possible dangers. When the little Octopods hatch, they have none of the retiring habits of their parents, but come freely into the light, close to the surface of the water. You may, perhaps, have heard of Victor Hugo's novel, "The Toilers of the Sea," in which he gives such a frightful account of a fight between a man and an Octopus. My father described to me a real encounter with one in Sydney Harbour. He was fishing for "black brim," about nine o'clock one summer evening, in as large a boat as he could manage alone. He soon discovered that the night was a very bad one for the purpose, owing to the water being full of phosphorescent light. The least movement of his hand sent a quivering stream of light all down his line, warning off the fishes most effectually. At length, however, he felt a bite, and with very cautious heaving brought something to light: it was a small cask, contents unknown. While he was engaged in examining this unexpected fish, his attention was attracted by an odd rustling at the other end of the boat, and looking up, he saw a curious shape, shiny at the surface, but all arms and legs, like the father of spiders, advancing towards him, as it were bestriding the boat, the long limbs reaching and seeming to grasp the gunwale on each side. My father attacked him at once with an oar, and was fortunate enough to kill him, or he might have had a very unpleasant embrace.

There are at present, in the Fish-House, two birds whose presence must make the other inmates very uneasy,—a Darter and a King Penguin: the one a river-tyrant, the other a sea-pirate. The Darter is built not unlike a heron, with a very long neck and small head, which taper from the shoulders to the lancet-point of his terrible beak. He either pursues his prey under water, or watches for it like a kingfisher. In either case his head and neck are drawn back till the proper moment, when, with one rapid dart, he drives his weapon through his victim's shoulder, then shakes him loose, and throwing him up, catches him head-first and swallows him. Billy, the King Penguin, like his kind, is sleek and fat, and Billy is "very artful," as the keeper told me. While watched he is on his good behaviour, but he never loses a chance of giving a sly peck. This is the more ungrateful of him, as the keeper brought him up by hand, having to feed him no less than five months before he would forage for himself. This was probably only Billy's "artfulness," for Penguins are very clever birds. They look stupid enough sitting up or waddling on land; but watch one in

the water, and you will be amazed at the speed and grace of his movements. If you want to know more of the habits of Penguins, and the pleasures of being pecked by them, you must read "A Naturalist's Voyage in the *Challenger*."

THE EAGLES' AVIARIES.

HERE and in the Vultures' Aviaries are found the larger birds of prey, looking grand, fierce, and melancholy. Most of them sit motionless on their perches as if in deep thought, and I fear their thoughts cannot be very happy ones, for the aviaries, though so lofty, and adapted as much as possible to suit their requirements, must seem to these huge birds, accustomed to soar aloft in the sky where no eye can follow them, but miserable prisons.

The larger birds of prey are growing very scarce in the British Isles. The noblest of them all, the Golden Eagle, is now entirely confined to a few inaccessible mountain tracts of the Scottish mainland, and to some of the wildest rocky isles among the Orkneys and Hebrides. The extensive deer forests, which are kept as quiet as possible except during the short deer-stalking season, have preserved here and there a specimen of this royal bird. On the other hand, the excessive pains taken to protect the grouse on many of the Scotch moors have proved fatal to great numbers not of Eagles only, but of all the smaller birds of prey, including the finest of all the hawk tribes. The "cairn-trap," though a very simple, is a very deadly contrivance. A pyramid of large stones—in Scotland called a cairn—is raised on some lofty spot in the open moorland, and on the top of this a strong spring-trap, secured by an iron chain, is placed without any bait. Eagles, hawks, "Gleds," or kites, and meaner birds of prey, such as ravens and hooded crows, in their long flights over the wild country where they seek their food, light on these cairns for occasional rest, perhaps carrying a bird which they wish to devour at leisure. In an instant they find themselves hopelessly fast by the leg in the trap.

There is something to be said for the killing of the Golden Eagles, since though they live chiefly, I believe, on the mountain hares, they are also very destructive to young lambs in the spring. But I am sorry to hear that the Osprey, or Fishing Eagle,—a smaller bird, but very handsome, and most interesting to watch when pursuing his prey,—is also becoming rare. Sportsmen shoot them for no useful purpose, but merely for the pride of saying they have done it.

If we are to believe the stories of our ancestors, Eagles used to be very much bolder than they are in the present day. Pennant, in his "Zoology," written about a hundred years ago, tells us that "it is very unsafe to leave infants in places where

THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

Eagles frequent, there being instances in Scotland of two being carried off by them, but fortunately the theft was discovered in time, and the children rescued unhurt out of the Eagle's nest to the affrighted parents." A native of the Isle of Skye called Neil, was said to have been left in a field by his mother when an infant, and

to have been carried away by an Eagle in its talons to the other side of a lake, and laid on the ground. Some people that were herding sheep saw it happen, and, guided by the child's cries, found him and brought him home to his mother unhurt. All his life afterwards he was called "Eagle." There are many such stories, but the only really well-authenticated one which I know does not end so well as these; and I confess it seems rather improbable that an Eagle, who cannot be much used to carrying babies, and is accustomed to seize its prey in a very rough-and-ready manner, should be able to do so without hurting them.

In 1838 a little girl of five years old, called Marie Delex, was playing with her

THE EAGLE'S NEST.

companions on the sunny slopes of the Swiss mountains, when an Eagle swooped down and carried her away, in spite of the cries of the other children. Some peasants, hearing the screams, came as quickly as possible, but looked in vain: nothing was to be found of the poor child but a little shoe on the edge of a precipice.

A hundred years ago there was a law in the Orkney Isles entitling anybody who killed an Eagle to a hen out of every house in the parish in which it was killed. The keen sight of the Eagle is proverbial. It gazes below and around, and marks its prey at a wonderful distance. Its sense of hearing is equally acute. If a crow or a raven find anything good (according to their ideas) to eat, and is rash enough to give a single croak of triumph, an Eagle, if there be one in the neighbourhood, is certain to hear it, and pounce down and rob the smaller bird of its expected treat. Eagles, though very voracious, can go an immense time without food, I should think very nearly as long as Dr. Tanner himself; and when their fast is over, they have the advantage of being able to attack a shoulder of lamb or

a young pig at once, instead of beginning on water-melon, which they would consider very poor fun.

HARPY EAGLES AND SLOTH.

The Harpy Eagle, an inhabitant of the South American forests, is perhaps the grandest of all the Eagle tribe. It has the same dignified bearing and gleaming eye as the Golden Eagle, and a plumy crest on its head, which it can raise or droop

as it likes. Its strength is immense, and it is said that it will sometimes attack a man, and even beasts of prey. A blow from its beak or talons must be a frightful thing. The Harpy Eagle preys on monkeys, fawns, opossums, and other animals; but its principal food is the Sloth. Of all animals the sloth seems the most awkward and most helpless; but its curious structure is perfectly adapted to its mode of life. It lives in trees, which it appears to climb with the greatest difficulty, as if the exertion of moving were painful. Once in a tree, it remains there till it has stripped it of every morsel of fruit, blossom, and leaf, and even of the bark. It sleeps hanging from a branch; not, however, head downwards, like the bats, but holding on by all fours, in which position it seems quite comfortable. Its movements are accompanied with a most piteous sort of cry, which, it is said, frightens or melts the hearts of the beasts of prey. Its cries, however, make no impression on the Harpy Eagle, and wherever sloths are most abundant, there he is sure to be found.

The Osprey is a bird of passage found in many parts of Europe, Asia, and America, but only near lakes and rivers, and along the coast, as it is a strictly fishing bird. When it arrives in the northern parts of the United States in March, it sometimes finds the bays and ponds frozen, so that there is great difficulty in procuring fish, and yet there is no instance on record of these Ospreys or Fish-Hawks attacking birds or land animals for food, though they are so strong and swift that they might easily do so. They sweep down on their finny prey with an inconceivably rapid plunge, never trying to catch a fish leaping out of the water, but always when they are swimming near the surface. In the Gulf of Mexico, where there are shoals of flying-fish continually darting upwards to escape from the dolphins, the Osprey never makes a sweep at them, but plunges after them into the sea, sometimes deep enough to disappear entirely for a moment, and throws the water round into a foam. It is said that the first appearance of the Fish-Hawk is always hailed by the fishermen as the happy signal of the approach of shoals of herrings and other fish. Far from grudging the Fish-Hawks their share, the fishermen protect them in every way, and no one in the neighbourhood dares to shoot or molest them. The Italians call this bird the "Leaden Eagle," on account of the heavy way it plunges into the water, as if falling by its own weight. The Osprey makes its nest in a tree. It consists of moss, sticks, seaweed, grass, etc. It has to be repaired every year, and sometimes becomes an immense size, as it is generally enlarged in the process of repairing. In the interstices of the material smaller birds, such as blackbirds, make their nests. The Osprey is most good-natured about this. It allows these smaller fry to lay their eggs and hatch their young ones around it quite contented, and looks like a chief of olden times with his vassals round his castle.

THE OSPREY AND ITS TENANTS.

Ospreys are, as I said before, becoming scarce in the British Isles; but some still breed on rocky islands in the salt-water lakes of Sutherlandshire. They are wonderfully quick of sight, like the rest of the Eagle tribe, and, as they wheel aloft, keep a watchful eye on the water. Sometimes, when they have pounced on an unlucky fish, and borne him off in their talons, they are baulked of their meal in a curious way. There is a third species in Scotland called the White-tailed Eagle, a very large and powerful bird, though rather coarse and greedy in its habits. If one of these Eagles is perched in sight of an Osprey busy at his fishing, he will wait till the latter rises slowly in the air with a fine sea-trout firmly grasped in his talons, and then dash down on him with a savage scream. The poor Osprey, to escape this attack, drops the fish, and his enemy, who wanted nothing better, snatches it and carries it off before it can reach the water.

I once read two such pretty quaint lines, on a very old monument in a little church in Devonshire, alluding to the flight of the Eagle:

> The Eagle's wing may soar a lofty flight,
> But gracious souls mount higher, out of sight.

THE NORTHERN AVIARY.

HERE are more of the rapacious birds, chiefly the smaller kinds: Kites, Hawks, Buzzards, and an immense variety of the Falcon tribe. They are a very interesting and peculiar race, regarded with the utmost awe by our small birds. The Sparrow-hawk is the most destructive of our English Hawks. It follows its terrified prey in the most pertinacious manner, even into barns and churches, and will pounce upon young chickens and make fearful havoc in a pigeon-cote. The Kestrel is sometimes confounded with the Sparrow-hawk, but is a much more harmless and also more useful bird; and the farmers ought to be obliged to it instead of persecuting it, as it kills quantities of field-mice, on which it will strike from a great height with unerring aim.

The rapidity with which not the eagle only, but many of the long-winged Hawks will stoop upon and strike their prey can hardly be conceived by any one who has not seen it. This, no doubt, was one of the great attractions of the ancient sport of Falconry, which was once as popular in England as shooting is now. It is not yet entirely given up, and I am assured by gentlemen who have taken part in it that

nothing can be more beautiful and exciting. The Hawk chiefly in use is the Peregrine Falcon, a bird of very high courage, keen of sight, and swift of wing. This bird still breeds in various parts of the British Isles, selecting the most precipitous rocks for its breeding-place. Of those trained for the purpose of hawking, some are taken young from the nest, while others are caught full-grown by an ingenious system of lines and nets as they fly across the open fens of Holland. The latter class are of course more difficult to reclaim, as they are not easily cured of their wild habits; but if skilfully trained, they prove, I believe, stronger and healthier than those caught young, and thus more valuable for flying at their game. The female Peregrine is distinguished as the "Falcon." Like all the other hen birds of prey, she is larger and stronger than the male, who is called the "Tercel." He is, however, a wonderfully fierce and bold bird, and can be flown even at the heron, in spite of his powerful wings and dangerous bill. I will now tell you something of the sport of partridge-hawking, of which I hear a good deal from friends belonging to a hawking club, which practises it with much success on the wolds of Yorkshire. The Hawks are carried out to the scene of action on a sort of square hung by straps over the falconer's shoulders, and enclosing his body. When this is set down, the birds looking very handsome with their coloured hoods and plumes, two or three are chosen and carried by the sportsmen on their wrists ready for a flight, the wrists being protected from the Hawks' piercing talons by a stout leather hawking-glove. A steady old pointer is then set to find the partridges; but it often happens that one of the hawking party catches sight of a covey on a bare stubble. When the dog points or the partridges are sighted, one of the Falcons is unhooded and thrown into the air. It soars to a considerable height, and having reached what is called "a good pitch," wheels in circles above the heads of the party, who are walking towards the crouching game. The partridges are in great terror of the Hawk, and when they see him aloft, will not stir till they are actually walked up to. When they do at last rise, they fly off at such a pace that you would think that they must reach the shelter of some hedge or turnip-field ere anything could overtake. The Hawk is perhaps taking one of his wide turns in the air a hundred yards or more from the spot where they rise, but the falconer's well-known cry calls his attention to the escaping birds, and, swift as their flight is, a very few seconds appear to bring him within striking distance of the bird which he has chosen as his "quarry;" and he shoots down on it with such violence that the shock of the blow can sometimes be heard across a good-sized field. Having "trussed" his partridge,—that is, seized it in his claws,—he generally alights with it on the ground, and the falconer, running up, finds him standing on the dead bird, and tearing at its head. He then lays hold on the Hawk's "jesses," long leather strings

A HAWKING PARTY.

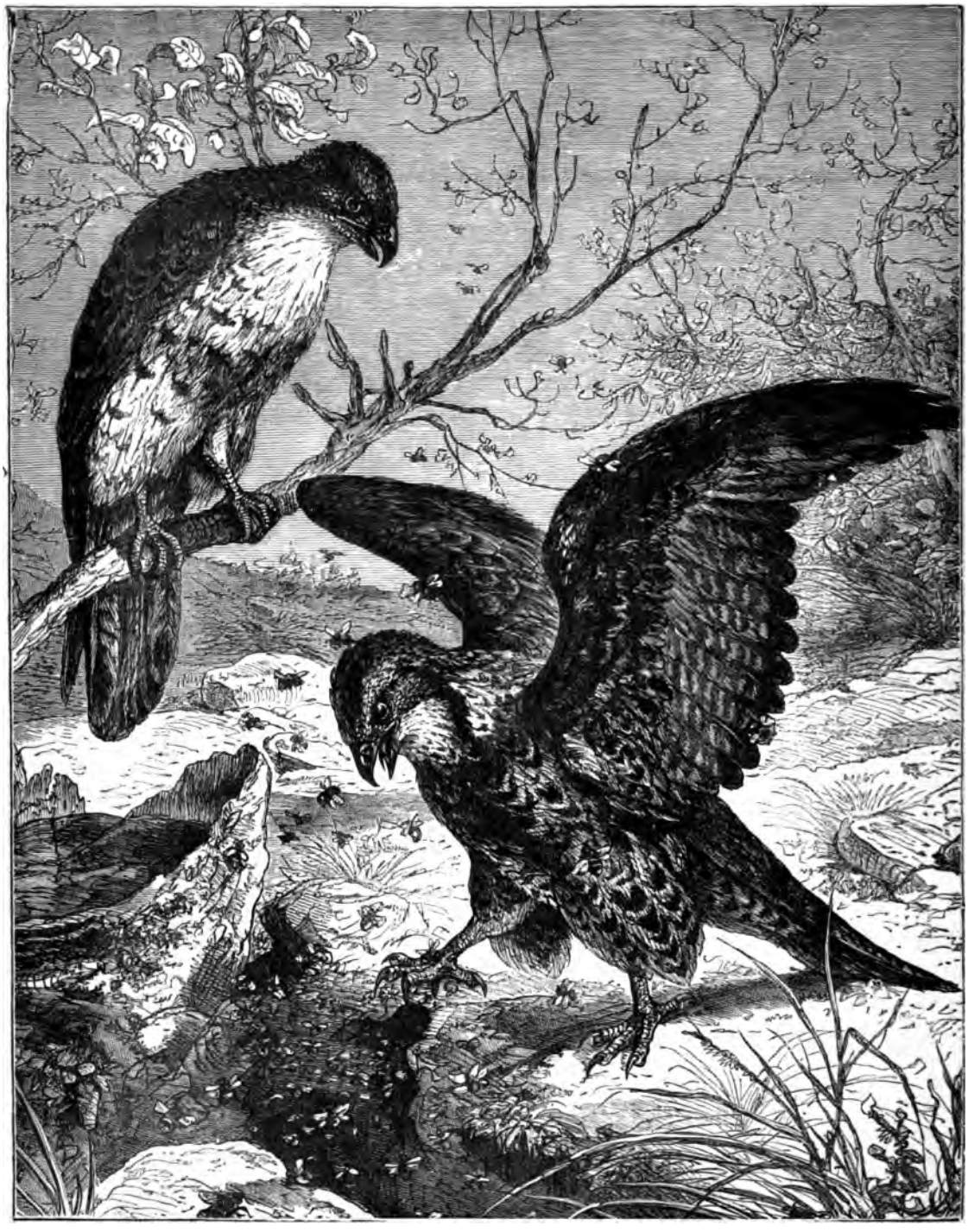
attached to its legs, and with these makes it fast again to his wrist, and then replaces its hood over its eyes. I have used several words which may seem new and strange; but the truth is, that falconry in old times had a complete language of its own, much of which is still in use. For instance, the Hawk's beak was called its "singles;" its nostrils, "nares;" and a great deal more of the same sort.

Hawks are flown at many other birds besides partridges. Rooks, with their strong pinions and their habit of soaring, give very fine flights, sometimes going up—up—up to escape their pursuer, till both Hawk and quarry are mere specks in the sky. Herons in the old days used to be most famous for what was called the "high-mounter," and valuable Falcons were often lost in pursuing them; but herons are now scarce except in a few places not at all suited for Hawking. Magpies, I am told, afford a very droll chase, dodging and doubling in and out of trees and hedges.

Hawks in their wild state are often strangely audacious. My father was shooting under the Orme's Head near Llandudno, when a partridge which he had wounded was pounced on by a Peregrine when in the very act of falling, and carried away to the cliffs in his sight. In Australia it is quite common for one or two of the native Hawks to follow sportsmen in pursuit of ducks or quail, keeping just out of gunshot, but always ready to seize a wounded bird.

Birds that are not classed among birds of prey will sometimes imitate the habits of the Hawk or Eagle. The common carrion crow is a very dangerous neighbour to a farm-yard; and before Hurlingham had become the gay place it is now, a pair of these, which had built in a lofty tree in my grandfather's adjoining garden, carried off, in broad daylight, many ducks and chickens from the Hurlingham coops. Crows, however, like ravens, have a natural tendency to prey on anything small and defenceless, but I have just heard a story of a gull, which may surprise as well amuse you. A friend in the East Riding has a pond in his grounds where he keeps a variety of water-birds. One of these—a herring-gull, which ought to have been contented with eating the pond-fish—caught a baby water-hen, and was proceeding to swallow it, when the mother, attracted by the cries of the young one, flew out and attacked the gull so fiercely that it was obliged to drop the little water-hen, and act on the defensive. The old hen, by a series of assaults on the gull, successfully covered the retreat of her little one, and at last flew off chuckling triumphantly. I have heard of a jay in an aviary showing the same irregular appetite for little birds as this greedy gull.

The Buzzards are very strong and large, but have none of the daring of the nobler birds of prey, nor their swiftness of flight. The common Buzzard is very indolent; it will sit for hours perched on a tree, and dart upon the game that comes



THE HONEY BUZZARD.

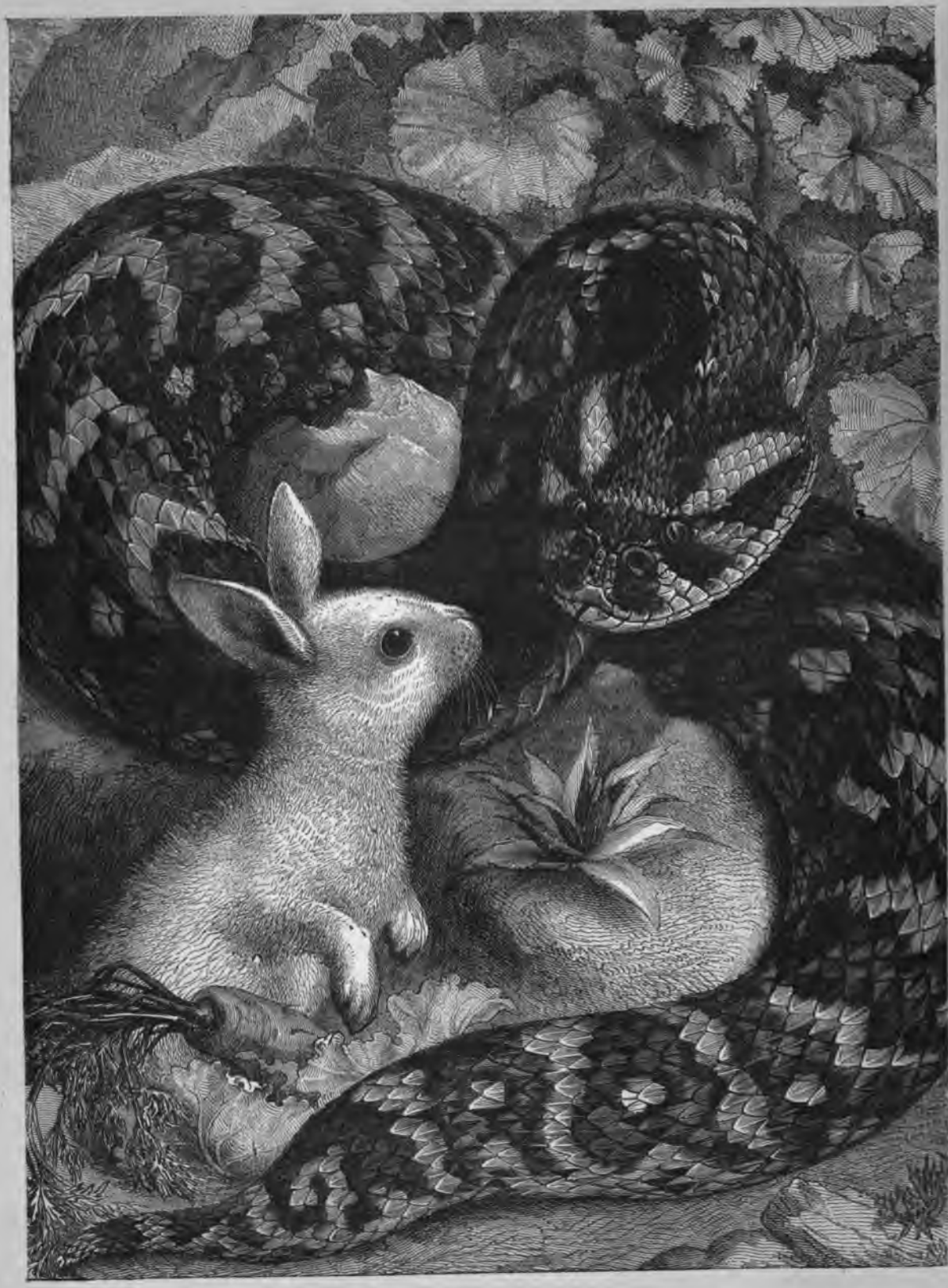
in easy reach, such as birds, small quadrupeds, reptiles, and insects. It is very l of taking possession of the deserted nest of a crow to lay its eggs in.

he Honey-Buzzard is very rare in England. In spite of its name, it does not ly feed on honey, or make it; it lives, however, a great deal on wasps and bees insects of various kinds, and feeds its young on them. It also eats frogs, ds, and mice, but likes insects best. These Buzzards are fond of wintering in pt, and are seen in vast quantities about Cairo, where they are very tame, and a great deal on dates, I suppose from scarcity of other food. They make their earance in spring in Greece, and in the early ages Aristophanes says that the ey-Buzzard "governed that country, and men fell on their knees when they e first blessed with the sight of it, because it pronounced the flight of winter, told them to begin to shear their spring fleeces." No one who has read that ghtful little book, "Friends in Fur and Feathers," can help feeling a special rest in Buzzards. The history of two which were taken from their wild bog ie among the water-lilies as babies, and given to the authoress, is simply enchant-

The horrid boys who had stolen them from the nest had tried to feed them nashed potatoes, on which diet the poor little things would soon have died, but r new mistress knew better. She got them raw meat and rats and mice and wned sheep, and all sorts of nasty things, which suited their constitutions exactly, the birds throve and grew up into splendid Moor-Buzzards, to her great ght and pride. They were called Jupiter and Juno; and the hen bird (after the ner of the Hawk family to which I alluded before) was much the larger and finer the two. With almost all other birds the cocks are larger and have gayer nage, besides being able to sing the best songs.

THE REPTILE-HOUSE.

THERE are no creatures in the world so much disliked as Snakes. They are not lestructive, but they are all persecuted, for, as too often happens in the world, innocent suffer for the guilty. There are two great classes of which people may be afraid. First, there are the Boas and Pythons, huge creatures which are venomous, but are able to crush the life out of anything round which they can ie themselves. Even cattle and deer are not safe from these monsters when



BOA-CONSTRICTOR AND RABBIT.

full-grown; there have been instances of their destroying human beings, but these are very rare, as the huge reptiles mostly live in deep jungle far from the haunts of men. They lie in wait for their prey generally near some water to which quadrupeds come to drink. Darting out their long necks, they seize the luckless animals with their strong teeth usually near the throat, and then rapidly coil their whole length round them, after which they have a wonderful power of contracting their folds till they have crushed the poor creature into a shapeless mass, when they slowly suck him down. The way in which their seemingly small mouths and throats will stretch to take down some large body can hardly be believed by any one who has not witnessed it; yet I would not recommend any of my little friends to go and see the Boa-Constrictor fed; it is a painful and disgusting sight. An odd thing once happened at the Zoological Gardens. A Boa was left too long without his dinner, and actually swallowed the blanket placed in his box to keep him warm! The largest of these formidable Serpents are found in the thick forests of Guiana, and in the tropical isles of Java and Sumatra to the south-east of Asia.

The venomous Snakes are far more dangerous than the huge creatures I have just been describing, found for the most part in hot countries. In British India thousands of persons are killed by them every year. Many parts of Africa are also much infested with them. I daresay you have read in history of the little Asp which Queen Cleopatra allowed to kill her. The "Cerastes," or Horned Viper, a thick, large-headed Snake found in hot sandy districts, is very deadly.

The Rattlesnake, which is spread widely through America, is a very poisonous species, and would cause even more mischief than it does if it did not give notice of its presence by the rattle at its tail, which it always sounds when angry. This Snake often grows to a great size, and it is said you may count the years of its age by the number of rings in its rattle.

Australia has many poisonous Snakes, and in the less populous parts of the country some of these, especially the large and ugly black Snake, with its rusty red throat, are often met with. It is a curious fact that the island of Tasmania, though cooler than the mainland, has been more troubled with poisonous Snakes. Their number, however, was a good deal reduced while Sir John Franklin was Governor, as Lady Franklin gave a reward for the head of every one that was killed.

In England happily we have only one kind of poisonous Snake, the Viper or Adder, and the bite even of this has rarely proved fatal to human beings, though sportsmen often lose valuable dogs by it. It is chiefly found on dry heaths. Its young are hatched from eggs, but many witnesses declare that they have actually seen the little brood, when alarmed, run into the mother's open mouth for safety. Some able naturalists dispute this; but I heard quite a clear case of the same kind

with regard to the Black Snake in Australia. It is very curious that Ireland, near as it is to England, has no Snakes at all.

Little people often talk of Snakes "stinging," but this is a mistake; they wound by their bite. They have two hollow teeth in the upper jaw, at the root of which lies the poison-bag. These fangs generally lie flat against the roof of the mouth, but when the creature is angry it sets them up so that they press on the poison-bag, and when it bites the poison is forced through the hollow tooth into the wound.

Deadly as many of the Snakes are, men accustomed to dealing with them become quite fearless of their bite. I knew a gentleman who lived in New South Wales who caught hundreds of them alive. His plan was to draw them back by the

THE VIPER.

tail with one hand, while he ran the other along their bodies till he had them fast by the throat, so that they could not turn their heads. I must tell you a funny story of this gentleman. He was going by steamer from Melbourne to Sydney, and when he was retiring at night to his berth, as they call the beds on shipboard, he found a stranger lying on the bed in his clothes. For some time the man was very rude, and would not give up his place, but at last Mr. K—— said, "At least let me take my little bag of snakes from under the pillow; they are all venomous, and very valuable." You will not be surprised to hear that the uncivil stranger jumped up as if he had been already bitten, and rushed on deck!

Besides the Boas and Pythons, which coil round and crush their prey, and the venomous Snakes, which kill by their poisoned bite, there are many Snakes which

are perfectly harmless, but are cruelly punished for looking so like their dangerous cousins. The common Ringed Snake of our fields and woods is continually killed by the country people, who mistake it for the Viper, though really there is no close resemblance. It is particularly common in the fen districts, where frogs—its favourite food—are most abundant. Indeed, poor Froggy would protest if he could against our calling this Snake harmless, for it has no mercy on him and his. It is pitiful to hear him cry out when his enemy comes gliding towards him. He does not attempt to escape, but seems quite benumbed with fear. This Snake is not unfrequently kept tame, and there is certainly some pleasure in watching its graceful movements. A lady known to my family had one which she made quite a pet, and which would coil about her and hang round her neck like a jewelled collar. But in one respect they are not nice creatures, having a rank disagreeable smell. This, however, becomes much less offensive if they are fed on milk, of which all the Snake family are very fond. It is a pretty sight to watch them swimming with their heads well raised above the water, and their bodies waving in elegant curves.

There is another English Snake, the little silvery-grey Blind-Worm, hardly more than a foot in length, with mouth and teeth too small to hurt even an infant's finger, who is cruelly and wantonly destroyed. I dare say you may have seen one of these lying broken in two by the wayside. There is no need to cut them in half—they stiffen themselves in a curious way when alarmed, and then the slightest blow breaks them as if they were made of glass. I wish people knew and cared more about God's creatures: a great many beautiful and innocent lives are sacrificed to mere ignorance.

Our other British reptiles, Frogs, Toads, Lizards, etc., are all harmless inoffensive animals, but there is in many parts of England a rooted superstition about Toads being venomous. A friend of mine found a boy belabouring a poor Toad in Sussex, the ill treatment being accompanied with these words, "I'll larn ye to be a tooad!" and I have no doubt he thought he was perfectly justified in killing the poor creature, which he looked upon as a natural enemy. Toads have been regarded from the earliest times as odious creatures. Yet their habits are harmless; they live on worms and insects, and have no fangs or other known means of doing us mischief. It must, however, be confessed that their shape is ugly and their blotched skin very unpleasant to the eye. They live, too, in damp dark places, such as human beings dislike, and there is no doubt that now and then they emit a strong and most unpleasant smell. I have heard of a summer-house being for some weeks unused, owing to the presence of an overgrown Toad. All these things might of course raise a prejudice against them, but we find Latin writers gravely speaking of "extract of toad" as one of the chief drugs used by the skilful poisoners at Rome.

We find our own Shakespeare naming the Toad as the first ingredient in the poisonous cauldron used by his witches.

> Toad, that under cold stone
> Days and nights has thirty-one
> Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
> Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

Fables of many nations give the creature the same character, and I cannot but think that there must be some better excuse for it than the creature's unsightliness. Fish are not particular in their diet, but even the voracious Pike, who will swallow frog after frog till you wonder where he finds room to stow them, will spit a Toad out after he has had it in his mouth for a few seconds. A dog has been known to snap at one and run away yelping at the disagreeable taste in his mouth. Many naturalists believe that there is some harsh bitter in the skin, from which a noxious drug may possibly have been extracted, in times when vegetable and mineral poisons were less well known than they are now. Poor Toady, however, used to be credited with some better properties. In "As You Like It," the Duke compares the "uses of adversity" to the Toad, which, "ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head," in allusion to this curious old superstition regarding him.

The love of Toads for music is a well-ascertained fact. I remember a drawing-room, with a pianoforte near a large window opening on to a garden, where the evening music never failed to "draw" two or three fat old fellows. They would come floundering through the dewy grass, and take their reserved seats close round the open sash as regularly as the season-ticket-holders at the Crystal Palace fill their places at the Saturday winter concerts, and listen with their heads a little on one side, and a sort of half-pleased, half-critical attention, in much the same manner. I have no doubt, too, that their remarks to one another would have been quite as original and instructive if we could only have understood them.

In one part of Italy (in which country musical talent seems to have special facilities for developing itself), near the shores of the Adriatic, the Toads actually produce musical notes of their own, and are called "*Pesce cantante*"—singing fish. A professor of music has given me a curious account of their performances. I thought at first that he must mean Frogs, but, on my making him describe them very exactly, I saw that they must be really as he called them, "Toads;" but, as he explained, "not quite so large and so ugly as your English Toads—no." He was once staying at a little watering-place called Catolica, between Rimini, made famous by the great Italian poet Dante, and Pesaro, where the composer Rossini was born. A little river runs into the sea there, on the banks of which numbers of Toads dwell. They are evidently more light-hearted than their English relations,

FROGGIE.

and, unlike them, delight in the sun. They come out in the heat of the day and sit on the broad leaves of the water-lilies, and sing for joy. It was a great amusement to the professor and his friends to stand and listen to them; and he declares that they whistled just like birds, distinct intervals. When the professor began to whistle, the Toads all stopped their own song, and would turn round and listen intently to him, and, as soon as he had ceased, begin again.

Toads are said to live to a very great age, and there are some curious well-authenticated stories of their having been found walled up in oak-trees, where they must have existed without food for an immense time.

Frogs are very much more popular characters than their cousins. There is something smart and brisk about them in their shiny yellow coats. In the first stage of their existence as Tadpoles, or "Polliwogs," as they are called in some parts of England, they are funny little fellows, with their big heads and little wriggling tails, and when these drop off, and they take to themselves legs, and hop about round the pond or in the verbena-beds, complete independent little beings, I find them personally very endearing objects, but I do not expect universal sympathy in this taste.

Both Frogs and Snakes frequently occur in old legends and songs. The "Dragons" that we read of in Greek and Latin poets were, in fact, only Serpents, except in a few cases where they are particularly described as "winged." The famous "Laocoon," of which I daresay you have seen a cast, represents a father and his two sons struggling in vain in the coils of two huge Serpents, which Virgil, in telling the story, calls Dragons. So the Dragon killed by Cadmus, one of the earliest Greek heroes, is described by Ovid only as a huge Boa-Constrictor.

In our old English ballads the Snake often figures, sometimes under the name of "worm." There is a curious ballad about a fight between a "Childe," or knight, and a "laidly worm"—that is, a loathly or ugly Serpent. So Shakespeare makes Cleopatra inquire of the countryman, "Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there, that kills and pains not?"—meaning thereby her asp. Most of us know some nursery rhymes about Froggie, which are mostly funny, as those about the Snakes are generally serious. There was "Froggie who would a-wooing go," who came, by-the-bye, to a sad end. Then we have another Frog of similar tastes—

> "Ho!" says this Frog, "I will go ride,
> With a sword and buckler by my side,
> Cockmacary! Kitty alone and I."

Then there is the fairy tale of the Frog who saved the Princess's life on condition that she would marry him, and came afterwards to claim her promise.

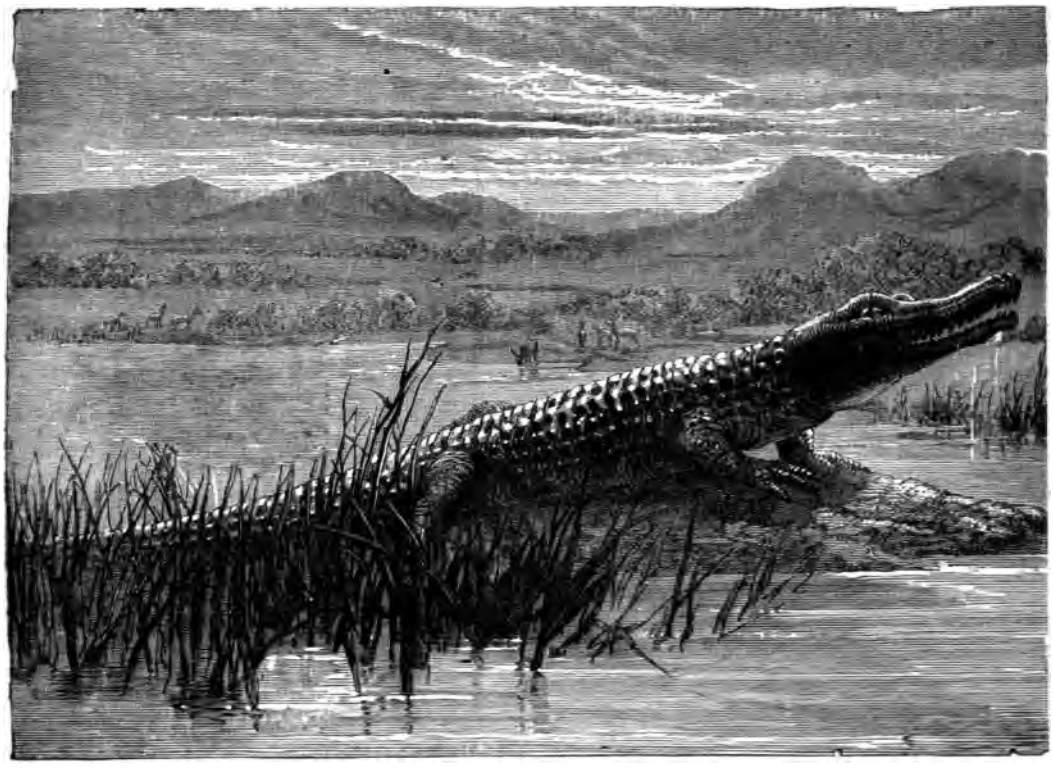
I cannot help thinking that these and other Frog stories are partly due to the ludicrous resemblance which Frogs bear to human creatures. Not only do they look wonderfully like men when swimming, but even when sitting up they often make one think of a fat little man with a yellow necktie. The mother Frog in the fable, who burst herself while trying to rival the ox in size, not only shows up human conceit, but might easily be represented in something like a human shape.

Our prettiest British reptile is, I think, the graceful little brown Lizard, and even this innocent little animal some people are ignorant enough to be afraid of. I have never forgotten the horror of seeing our nursery-maid, when I was a very small child, throw one of these, which had come up into the nursery in the coal-box, right into the fire. I screamed and cried, as may be imagined, and made a fine piece of work, and was assured by the nursery-maid and the nurse, to console me, that these creatures liked the heat of the fire, and that that was why they got into the coals. I did not believe them entirely, but the idea soothed me a little. I hoped there might be some truth in it. I think, too, that the hope was encouraged by some confused notion running in my head regarding the salamander, to which I had no doubt heard the elders allude, and which I had probably been told was a small Lizard. The ancient superstition that this creature, which by the way is a Newt, and not a real Lizard, can live in the flames, I believe, existed even in the last century.

It was also believed that these poor little animals had the power of turning quicksilver into gold, when it was poured on to them in a vessel placed on the coals. The Romans considered it a most poisonous creature, and had a proverb, "If a Salamander bites you, put on your shroud;" and it was thought worthy of record that a woman who had wished to get rid of her husband had put a Salamander into his food, and that he had eaten it, and had actually suffered no inconvenience!

The beautiful little green Lizard is found occasionally in the island of Guernsey, but the climate of England is not warm enough for it. Every one who has travelled on the Continent of Europe has come across it, and admired its little emerald-green coat of mail flashing in the sun as it darts rapidly across one's path. All the Lizard tribe love the sun, from these dainty little creatures up to the great Crocodiles or Alligators, as they are called in America. When I was last visiting the Aquarium at Brighton, I went into the new Alligator-cavern, and found there what to me was a very touching sight, though I am afraid I can't expect to excite much sympathy for Crocodiles. Three of these strange creatures lay perfectly motionless in a very shallow pool of water. Two of them had their noses close to the rockwork on one side where there was a little bubbling in the water, which I presently discovered to be warm water let in in some manner to raise the natural temperature, which would

otherwise be fatal to them. The third was turned the other way, and had his nose in a tiny ray of sunshine which had made its way in through a chink above. I thought of the Crocodile in his own country on the banks of the Nile, paddling in the warm river, lazily floating among the water-lily leaves, or lying on the hot sands basking in the burning sunshine he loves; and contrasting the scene with this cool underground home, I could not help feeling for him, though he *was* a Crocodile!



BASKING IN THE SUN.

In some of the large rivers of Africa, Crocodiles may be seen in immense shoals floating on the surface, without any apparent motion, and are often mistaken at a little distance for the trunks of trees covered with rough bark; but this apparent sleepiness is only put on by the creature to deceive his prey: the moment an animal approaches within reach, he darts upon it and sinks at once to the bottom. Crocodiles will not often attack human beings except from hunger, which makes them furious. Children on the banks of the Nile are often destroyed by them.

Crocodiles lay their eggs on the sand, and leave them to be hatched by the sun. It is curious that the eggs of such a monstrous animal should be only about the size

of those of a goose. The natives are very fond of these eggs, and are constantly seeking the nests. One Crocodile will lay as many as a hundred in the year. The ichneumon is always on the watch for them also, and destroys numbers of them; and the vultures hide among the branches of the trees near the banks of a river on purpose to see where the Crocodile leaves them. As soon as she retires they call each other to the feast, and all fall upon the hidden treasure.

These creatures seem specially appointed by nature to prevent Crocodiles multiplying too fast, but I heard the other day of a more curious providence regarding them. My authority is a gentleman who had been a long time in Australia, who declares that in some place in the north, where one kind of Crocodile was very abundant, the affectionate parents used to watch for the hatching of their eggs, and as the young ones ran towards the water—which they always do directly they are hatched—snapped at them, and ate them up.

The people of Isna in Upper Egypt have a curious superstition concerning Crocodiles. They say there is a king of them, who lives near Isna, who has ears and no tail, and that he is a noble animal, never doing harm to any one. It was this idea which suggested Southey's delightful poem of the "Crocodile King." A poor woman whose child is eaten by a Crocodile goes to the Island of Reeds, where the Crocodile King lives, to tell him her misfortune, confiding in his goodness. She finds him taking care of the Queen's eggs, and addresses him in this way:—

"I know that you, Sire, never do wrong,
You have no tail so stiff and strong;
You have no tail to strike and slay,
But you have ears to hear what I say."

"You have done well," the King replies,
And fix'd on her his little eyes;
"Good woman, yes, you have done right,
But you have not described me quite.

"I have no tail to strike and slay,
And I have ears to hear what you say;
I have teeth, moreover, which you may see,
And I will make a meal of thee!"

The woman, however, was quite equal to the occasion, for the King's want of a tail made him slow and awkward in his movements, so "she took him his forelegs and hind between, and trundled him off the eggs of the Queen!" After that she caught the little Prince Crocodiles, who were playing about, and "thrust the head of one into the throat of the other, and made each Prince Crocodile choke his

and then she escaped. When the Queen came home and found her gone her fury was great.

> Then many a not very pleasant thing
> Passed between her and the Crocodile King.
> "Is this your care of the nest?" cried she.
> "It comes of your gadding abroad," said he.
>
> The Queen had the better in this dispute,
> And the Crocodile King found it best to be mute;
> While a terrible peal in his ears she rung,
> For the Queen had a tail as well as a tongue!

uthey says in his notes to this poem, that no one who has read Mr. Charles 's "Wanderings," will think the woman's attack on her intended devourer ıary. Mr. Waterton, before he came home and made love to the owls at Iall, travelled in South America, and has written a delightful book of his s there. Amongst them is a most amusing account of a fight with a Cro- which he actually rode on the animal, twisted its fore legs on its back by e for a bridle, and was dragged by the admiring crowd above forty yards nd. "Should it be asked," he says, "how I managed to keep my seat, nswer, I hunted some years with Lord Darlington's fox-hounds."

THE MARSUPIALS' HOUSE.

are a large class of animals called Marsupials, which are only found in and America. Their peculiarity consists in their carrying their young in pouch, from which the little ones can peep forth into the world. When gh, they jump in and out of this comfortable pocket. All the animals of with two exceptions, from the smallest Mouse to the big Kangaroos, have ches. In a country like Australia, where there are such tremendous rains s, and also terrible droughts, it is most important to the animals to have s of carrying their young ones quickly to a distant place of safety. The ıless creatures are the Warrigal, who is not really a native after all, and ıt creature with webbed feet, a bill like a duck, and a fur coat on his back, ous, or Water-Mole. He is essentially an aquatic animal—so that in fact ıd Mammals of Australia are Marsupials. Another peculiarity of these is their extreme tameness. Mr. Henry Kingsley represents a little boy

lost in the bush in "Geoffrey Hamlyn" as catching a native bear, and the animal making itself quite at home in his arms, and this incident is really quite a possible one. Young Kangaroos and Wombats, whose special aquaintance we shall make further on in their separate establishments, attach themselves immediately to their owners, and even grown-up animals will often eat from people's hands the day after they are caught. Once when my father was walking at dusk in the bush, a young Opossum, perhaps taking him for a tree, ran up his leg and body, and perched on his shoulder. My father stroked him and coaxed him, and carried him home quite contented to some small children, who were delighted with him. When they grow big, however, the common Opossums are rather rough clumsy creatures, without much individuality of character about them.

OUT FOR A WALK.

The little Ring-Tailed Opossum is a dainty little darling. It prefers rose-leaves to gum-leaves when it can get them, and will devour any quantity, holding a rose in its paws like a squirrel, nibbling off every petal, and throwing away the calyx. It will scamper about the room and tear the paper off the walls, and do no end of mischief to the furniture, and then race up the curtains and hang by its prehensile tail from the rod in such a fascinating manner that you forgive it everything. The common way of carrying one of these pets is by its tail, the end of which it will curl tight and firm round your finger; but sometimes, if it is in a cross mood, it will suddenly swing its body round, climb up its own tail, and give you a most unpleasant bite with its sharp little teeth.

The best-known of this tribe of animals is the American Opossum. The negro songs have made its name familiar to us. We have all heard of the "'Possum up a gum-tree, Racoon in a hollow," who was to be caught by his long tail and otherwise ill treated. In another song he is more tenderly alluded to.

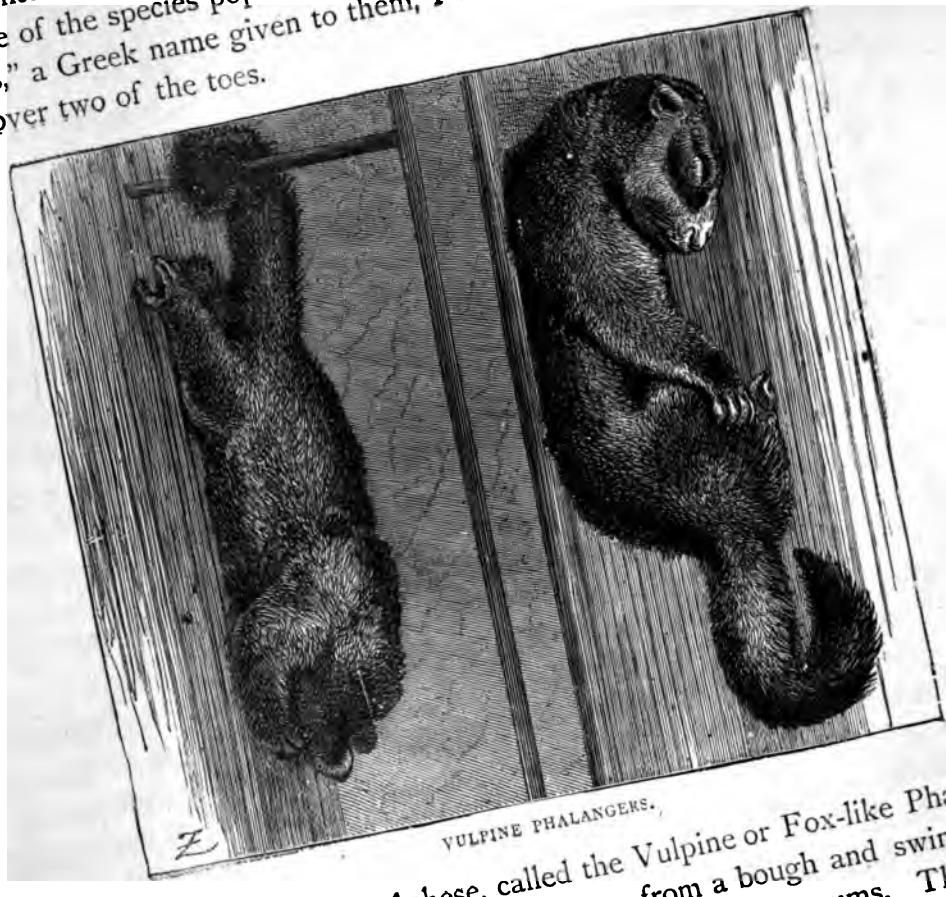
And when that I am dead and gone,
Lay my banjo by my side,
Let the 'possum and coon to my funeral go,
For they always was my pride.

The 'Possum-hunts used to be a favourite recreation of the poor negroes when their work was done.

In Australia, where Opossums of various species are so very numerous, the settlers often find them exceedingly troublesome. The aborigines, or "black fellows," as they are termed in the colony, used to keep them down, as they depended much on their flesh for food and on their skins for clothing. The few tribes that remain really in their half-savage state, still do so. It is a curious thing to watch their mode of 'Possum-hunting. Blackey goes to the foot of a hollow tree, and can tell at once by the marks on the bark whether any Opossums have lately gone up. If he feels sure they are at home, he proceeds to climb up to the hole, or perhaps (for he is very lazy) sends up his gin, or wife; and what do you suppose is the ladder by which they climb the trunk of the lofty gum-tree? Nothing but an upward row of notches cut with a tomahawk, just big enough to receive the great toe or the tips of the fingers. At each step upwards they cut a fresh notch, till at length they reach poor 'Possy's house, and the tenants are hauled out and thrown to the men below. But Blackey is in most places too much of a gentleman to care about 'Possums now. He likes beef and damper better, and looks for blankets and cast-off clothes instead of 'Possum-skins; so he hangs about the stations doing odd jobs, and smoking a pipe whenever he can get a fig of tobacco. Meanwhile the Opossums, which were harmless as long as they had only gum-trees to live upon, have changed their habits like the blacks, and have got a relish for grapes, figs, and peaches. They will go a long way to rob a garden, and are very destructive, as they knock down more than they eat. Accordingly every one's hand is against them, and they are killed without mercy. Great numbers are trapped; but more, I think, are destroyed by what is called "mooning." The sportsmen go out with their guns on a moonlight night (and moonlight in Australia is far brighter than that which we see in this country), and look out for the Opossums, which may be heard and seen chattering and clambering about high up in the gum-trees. The shooter gets the one he aims at as near as possible between his gun and the moon, so that the hairy outline is distinctly visible, and the mark is rarely missed. Two young friends of my father's killed eighty-seven thus in little more than two hours.

As Siberian and Russian furs grow scarcer, those of Australia come more into the market, and good prices are now given for Opossum rugs, especially those from Tasmania, where the climate is cooler. The furs from the mainland are of little

, they are taken in the winter, when nature thickens the coat for the otection. Besides the difference in the skins caused by climate and e are some species of which the fur is of a much higher value than those mon Opossum. The rare species known as "Cook's Opossum" has very y tinted fur, and there is a black variety, not so rare, which is very hand- ome of the species popularly known as Opossums are called by naturalists gers," a Greek name given to them, I believe, from some peculiarity in the ne over two of the toes.



VULPINE PHALANGERS.

You see a picture of one of these, called the Vulpine or Fox-like Phalanger, with a bushy prehensile tail, by which he can hang from a bough and swing himself to sleep. He has nearly the same habits and diet as the Opossums. There are other more interesting Phalangers, which closely resemble the Flying Squirrels, having a membrane stretched from the fore to the hind feet, which, though it does not actually enable them to fly, yet assists them to sail long distances from tree to tree at a very gentle slope.

It is curious that the American Opossum's power of feigning death so cleverly as ly to deceive those who do not know its habits well, from which the phrase ginated, does not seem to be shared by its Australian cousins.

Two large cages in front of the Marsupials' House are inhabited by a most wonderful-looking animal. We stand and gaze at him in amazement, for he seems to be a creature quite apart from anything else in the Gardens; he is more like some fantastic creation in a fairy tale than an actual living beast—the sort of individual who would have had a great deal to say to Alice had she happened to meet him in Wonderland, but with whom we ordinary matter-of-fact visitors seem to have nothing in common. It is the great Ant-Eater, or Ant-Bear, of South America. He is

about four feet and a half from the end of his long quaint snout to the root of his tail, and that great bushy appendage waves over his back and sweeps the ground in a most imposing manner. The Ant-Eater has no teeth; his mouth is a tiny slit at the end of his snout, from which protrudes a wonderful glutinous tongue, some eighteen inches long. His natural food is exclusively the white ant. He pulls down the large mounds made by these insects with his claws, and thrusts his long tongue among them, licking them up with the most astonishing rapidity; otherwise it would be impossible for such a big animal to satisfy his appetite with such small insects. I wonder what they feed him on in the Gardens? It would certainly be impossible to provide him with sufficient ants to keep him as sleek and good-tempered as he looks at present. I believe, however, that he does not despise fresh meat and fish if they are chopped up small enough for his tiny mouth.

The Ant-Eater runs with a very peculiar trot; it is said that he can keep up with the canter of a horse. He doubles in the long claws on his fore feet, and walks on

the outer portion only of them. He makes no sort of burrow, as his great bushy tail is sufficient protection for him. Mrs. Ant-Eater has one child at a time, which she carries on her back for a whole year. Generally a peaceable animal, and rather cowardly, she becomes quite fierce and pugnacious when she has a young one to think of, and fights with it clinging to her. She strikes with her sharp claws at the enemy chiefly with the right foot, the left resting on the ground; but if the danger increases, she turns herself on the ground on her back and uses both her fore feet as weapons. In this attitude she can give terrific blows, and even the jaguar finds it hard to conquer her. Sometimes the two combatants kill one another.

THE KANGAROO-SHEDS.

THE Kangaroo is an essentially Australian animal, unknown until the discovery of that country, and a most peculiar beast he is. There are various kinds of Kangaroos, varying in size from the tiny Kangaroo-Rat to the gigantic blue Woolley Kangaroo and Red Forester. Young Kangaroos, with their large gentle eyes and sleepy unsuspecting air, are very common as pets about country-houses in

THE KANGAROO.

Australia. They are easily caught, and very easily tamed. They hop after you in a sociable sort of way, rub their heads against you, and delight to have them scratched. But as they grow up they cease to be safe playfellows. Their short fore paws become *so strong* that a friendly pat may destroy your best coat or gown, and though quite

familiar with their owners, their tempers become uncertain and even savage. A gentleman in New South Wales whom my father knew had two such over-grown pets on his station. They were quite fearless, and so rough in their romps that visitors were warned to give them a wide berth. But their strangest peculiarity was the delight they took in hunting their own species. They would go out with the Kangaroo-dogs, with whom they were quite on familiar terms, would keep up with a run at best pace, and when one was killed would perform a gleeful war-dance round their prostrate brother. For a pet, one should try to obtain one of the smaller species, for instance, the elegant White-faced Kangaroo of the North, or that beautiful gentle creature the Golden Wallaby. The Paddy-Melon is a very nice little Kangaroo. I knew a lady who had one very young brought her, which used to hop to her and plunge into her lap head foremost, just as it would into its own mother's pouch.

IN THE BUSH.

The young Kangaroos are called "Joeys," and when a Kangaroo is hunted with one of these little fellows (whom you may see carried in this way at the Gardens, peering out into the world with its bright little eyes) in her pouch, she is at a great disadvantage, as its weight impedes her progress. Sometimes, when hard pressed, the mother Kangaroo will toss her Joey out on to a soft place, and in this way one is often caught and brought home to the wives and daughters of the hunters. Kangaroo-hunting is considered very good sport, though it has not the excitement of danger, except for the dogs, who often get fatal kicks from the Kangaroo. The ordinary Kangaroo-dog is a very large greyhound. Scotch deerhounds are occasionally employed, and do the work very well, especially on the high downs, where the cooler air suits their race. A Kangaroo in full flight is a most wonderful and

interesting object. He seems not so much to take leap after leap deliberately, as to lean forward at a certain angle, with his hind legs set like a mechanical spring, and on descending from one bound to be sent instantly flying again by the reaction of that spring. They bound along among the blue gum-trees, clearing the fallen trunks and the little creeks as if they were nothing, and without any apparent effort.

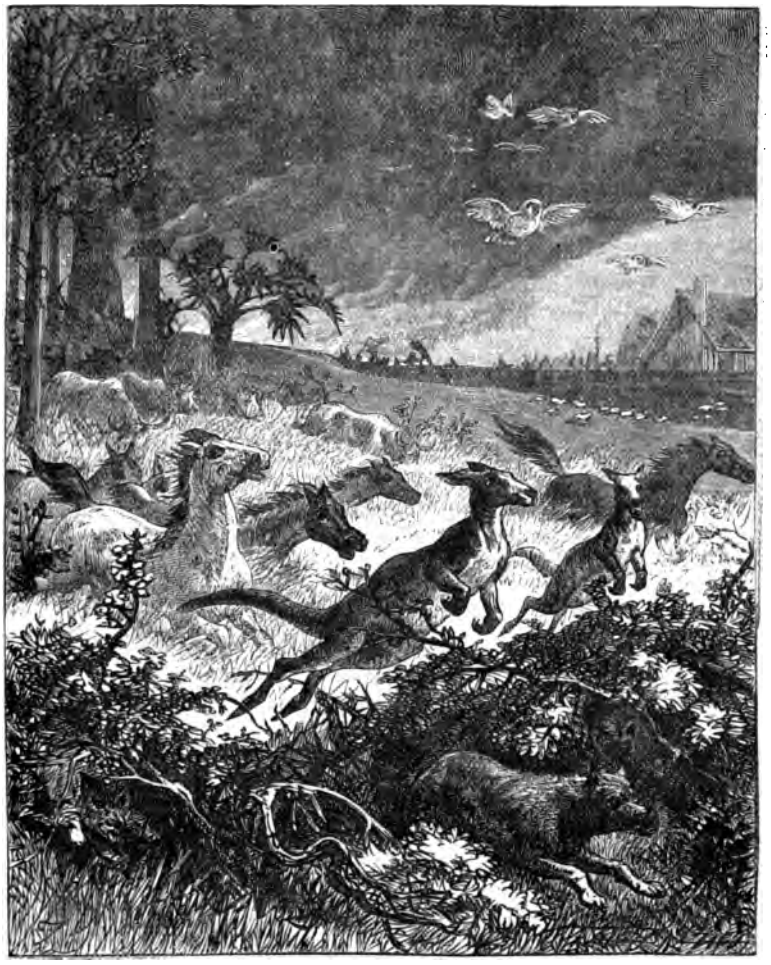
"Then take me a ride—oh, do!"
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo!

This was perhaps an unreasonable request on the part of the duck, who is provided with ample wings of her own for travelling purposes, but still one can quite sympathize with the wish. A ride on the strong firm tail of the Kangaroo through the strange silent bush would be a delightful experience.

People sometimes fancy that a Kangaroo uses his tail in jumping, but this is not the case; he no more uses it in jumping than a fox uses his brush in running. It doubtless assists him in making a sudden turn, but he keeps it swinging aloft, and it never touches the ground till he has slackened his speed. Kangaroos will occasionally turn and show fight to their pursuers. Two young Australians known to my father were riding out over some open ground in the neighbourhood of Wagga Wagga, when they saw a large "old man," as the big male Kangaroos are called, and started after him, expecting a good gallop. The chase was soon brought to an abrupt close, for the Kangaroo suddenly faced round and charged the nearest horse, who not unnaturally turned tail and reared. The Kangaroo then actually leapt up on to the horse's back, apparently with the intention of pulling the rider off his horse—certainly with clawing at his collar and damaging his coat. The other rider hastened to the rescue, when the Kangaroo jumped down and attacked the new-comer in exactly the same manner. The brave old fellow was killed, I am sorry to say. This anecdote was told in *The Field*, a few years ago. Generally speaking, however, it is only the dogs that an "old man" attacks. He plunges up to his shoulders in a water-hole, so as to have a chance of grabbing the dog who approaches him, or if there is no water at hand, he sets his back against a tree. In either case he does not trust to his fore paws as weapons (though they are powerful, and can give a disagreeable pat), but merely for grappling. He will hold a dog under water till he is drowned, or give him a very bear-like hug. But his most formidable mode of attack is with his hind feet, with which he can give frightful and often fatal kicks.

Generally speaking, the only enemies which interfere with the peaceful, harmless life of the Kangaroo are men and dogs, but there is one other which occasionally makes them take to their heels and fly for their bare life. When there has been

ain for a long time, and everything gets scorched and dried up, a lucifer match he ashes of a pipe carelessly thrown on the ground may set the bush on fire for s round. The hot wind often drives the roaring flames and the suffocating ke before it at a fearful pace. On rushes this most terrible enemy, a bush fire, ding and scorching every living thing near, and filling man and beast alike with or. The poor sheep lose their senses with fright, and run aimlessly hither and



A BUSH FIRE.

ier; but horses and cattle, and the wild creatures of the bush—Kangaroos, labies, and flocks of screaming Cockatoos—fly before it with all the strength and d of which they are capable.

he Kangaroo-Rat or Jumper, a small animal about the size of a rabbit, with legs, sometimes escapes from the dogs in an amusing way. They are gaining im fast—perhaps are within a few yards of him—when they are suddenly

brought to a standstill, and stare about on vacancy. The Jumper has bolted abruptly into the hollow trunk of a fallen tree! There is a very funny little Jumper called a "Rabbit-Rat" in some parts of Australia, a small creature with large ears, about the size of a squirrel. He attaches himself to some house or out-building, and is never so happy as when he can establish himself between the canvas ceiling of a room and the shingled roof above. Here one may watch their progress overhead by the bagging of the canvas as they descend from a jump. Their delight is to carry to this little colony everything they can lay their claws on, having the same thievish instincts as the magpie. A gentleman in New England, at whose house my father was staying, after tolerating their presence for a long time above his drawing-room, resolved at last to explore the loft, clear it out, and get rid of them. He found a comical collection of miscellaneous articles, lost during a long series of years: shirt-collars, ribands, combs, a pair of scissors, a ring, a spoon, a saucer, and scraps of all sorts of garments!

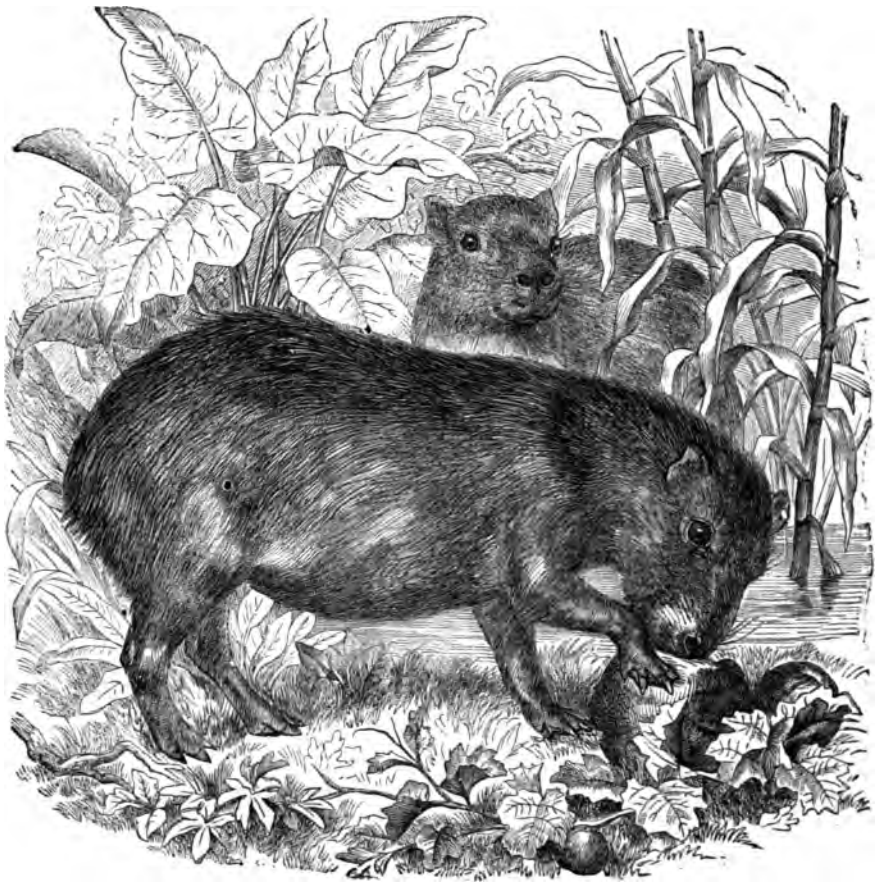
Kangaroo meat is very good, and is cooked in a variety of ways, recipes for which you find in Australian cookery-books. Kangaroo-tail soup is excellent.

THE WOMBAT-HOUSE.

We must have a look at the Wombats. They are droll, harmless creatures—something like wee bears, but plumper and smoother skinned, with round good-natured faces. In habits they are very like our English badger, burrowing deep in the ground and living on roots and vegetables. But unlike the badger, who is solitary, they live in communities, and sometimes undermine a great extent of ground with their burrows. When rabbits were introduced into Australia, they multiplied so fast that they did serious mischief on some estates, and had to be killed down at great expense. By far the most troublesome of the bunnies were a colony who had taken possession of a hill quite hollowed out with Wombat-holes: they had so many hiding-places and outlets that it was found hardly possible to destroy them. Wombats leave their holes chiefly at night, and steal about in a very quiet fashion. A gentleman I knew wanted to shoot one, and posted himself at dusk by a tree in the middle of a dry space which was full of their burrows. But though he watched all night, and now and then heard a little grunt or a light footstep, he never got a shot. A young Wombat makes a nice pet; it is not very clever, but gentle and affectionate, and will follow its owner like a dog. It is tidy in its habits, and thrives very well on a diet of bread and milk. Its worst fault is that it is liveliest at night, and does very funny things when wandering about the

house while people are asleep. It likes to make itself snug, and will roll itself up in any clothing it can find so tightly that it is very difficult to unwrap the creature. One of them put on a waistcoat of my father's in such a queer fashion that it was a quarter of an hour's job for two grown-up people to undress it. Full-grown Wombats get too big and strong for petting.

A Tasmanian lady, who was well known to my family, used to have a continual



WOMBATS.

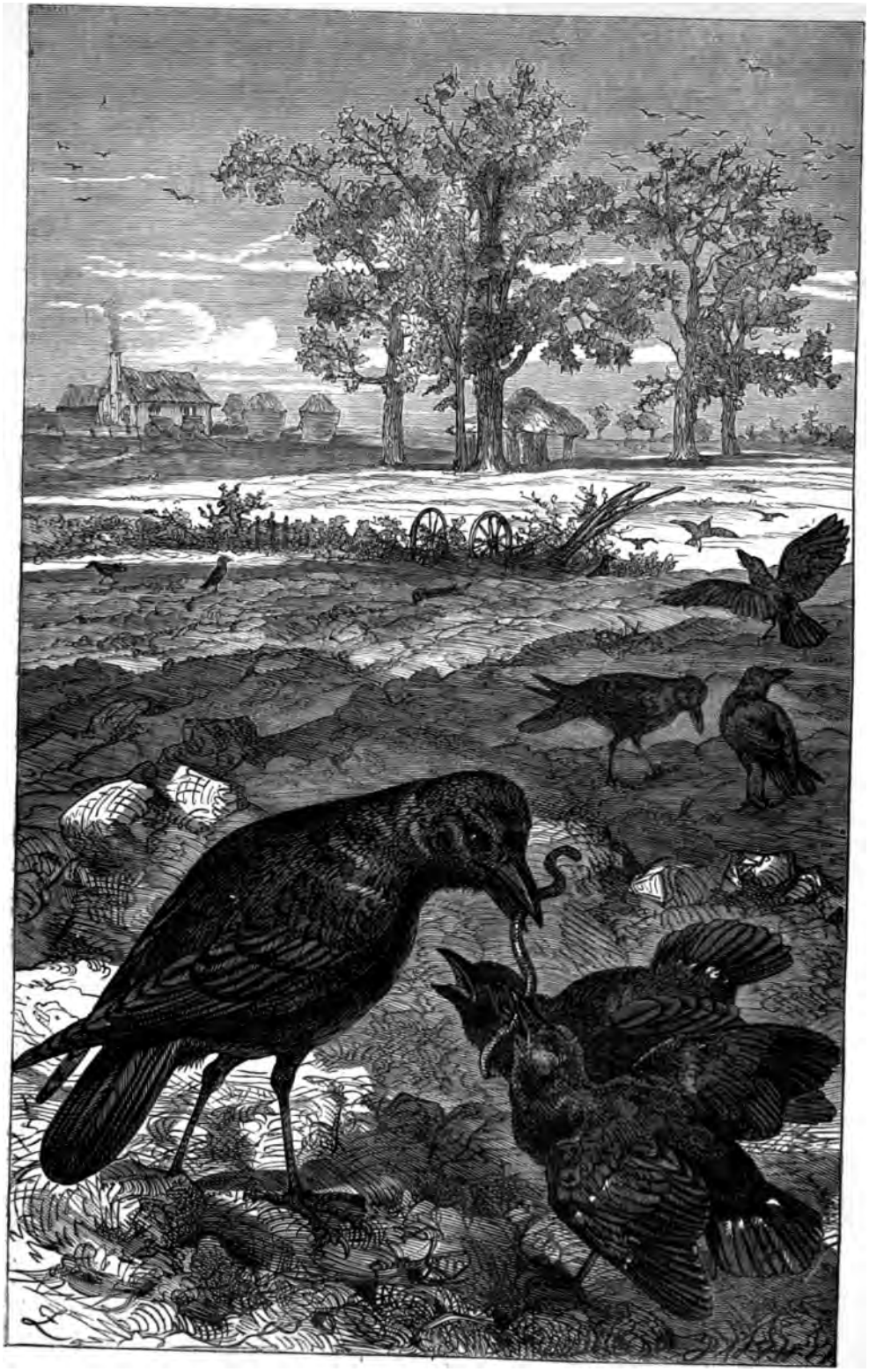
succession of them for the house, turning them out to form a sort of colony in a corner of the grounds when they got big enough to be troublesome. She used to give them very fine names—Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Euthanasia, and the like, which had a droll effect when she called them to her and they came grunting and whining for their dinner. Sometimes the old folks who had been banished to the garden would take it into their heads in the course of their rambles to pay a call at the house, and as these visits were always late at night, they caused some alarm to strangers. An instance of this occurred which has already been related in print;

but it was so odd that I must tell it again. Some young ladies just arrived at Forest were sleeping on the ground-floor, with the window partly open for cool It was a moonlight night, and you may imagine their terror when they v awakened by a noise at the window, and saw a large black creature heave the up with its back and then leap into the room. But that was not the worst. visitor, after shuffling and snuffling about the bed-room, actually began to scrar up the bed! The two girls sprang out on the other side, screaming for help wit their might, and climbed for safety on the top of a chest of drawers, whence pelted the intruder with books and packages. But he had made himself at hon their bed, and it was long before their cries brought assistance. Probably their fi made the time seem longer than it really was.

I may tell you that the flesh of the Wombat is considered very good, much well-fed pork; but I don't think you would care to eat such funny and soci creatures. The same lady who owned the Wombats with the fine names, had specially dear which she called "Sweetest and Loveliest." This creature l altogether with his devoted mistress, and would cuddle himself up behind cushion of her chair or in the folds of her dress. He would waddle after her in hot sun for a mile and a half, panting and puffing, sooner than lose sight of her; as Wombats love darkness, and seldom go abroad in the heat of the day, this as great a proof of affection as he could have given. They are capable of g affection for each other, as well as for the human race. Poor Euthanasia quite unexpectedly—it was feared from the effect of some poisonous root. event was made known by a scream which sounded almost human. Those heard it hastened to the garden, and found Agamemnon and Clytemnestra stan by the body and uttering the most piteous cries.

THE CROWS' CAGES.

THIS row of cages contains a great variety of the Corvine or Crow fa including our common Rooks and Crows. Familiar as our native species are t all, we must not pass them by without some notice. The same intimacy w makes it unnecessary to treat them with the formal deference due to stran demands a word or two of recognition as we pass. For better or for worse have associated themselves with mankind; not as dependants, quite the reve but as self-governed allies. Which party first proposed the connection, and w



A DAINTY MORSEL.

has profited most by it, is not recorded; but it is easy to see with half an eye that the birds have come to fancy themselves quite indispensable to us, and it must also be admitted that these relations to us are sometimes marked by a sort of arrogance, not to say tyranny. Did you ever see a Jackdaw who had the slightest doubt that the cathedral tower or spire was built for his recreation-ground, and the pipes for his nest? Do you suppose that the Rooks in the picture would conceive it possible that ploughing and sowing could go on without their sanction and presence? Only listen to their self-satisfied jargon as they settle down in the windy elm-trees of the old Hall, and you must feel that, whatever the lawyers may say, the Rooks are in their own view the real owners of the property, and our species only creeping about there on sufferance. There is no doubt that they take a sort of gossiping interest in the affairs of the inhabitants of the Hall, and talk them freely over among themselves. The hero in our Poet Laureate's beautiful poem "Maud," hears the birds in the "high hall garden" crying and calling "Maud! Maud! Maud!"

A friend of mine was present at a dinner at which Mr. Tennyson was also present, and the conversation having turned upon this poem, Mr. Tennyson asked what kind of birds these were generally supposed to be. Some one suggested "Nightingales," as being poetical birds; but the poet shook his head. No one could guess. "Why, Rooks of course," said Mr. Tennyson. Since I heard this story, I could often fancy I heard the Rooks calling "Maud! Maud! Maud!" as they go to roost.

Ravens and Crows have always been looked upon as birds of ill omen, partly, no doubt, from their somewhat forbidding appearance, but even more from the dogged obstinacy and complacency with which they reiterate their own opinions even when falsified by the event. What is more exasperating than a Crow sitting on a stump and croaking for rain when everything else in creation wants fine weather? What bird, I should like to know, except a Raven, would have had the assurance to answer "Never more!" to all Edgar Poe's interesting remarks, when it knew no more about the matter than he did? Even a parrot in the same position would have drawn a cork or said "Scratch a poll!" by way of variety.

The birds of which I have spoken are not, you see, troubled with scruples of delicacy, but for unabashed and brazen audacity you must go to the Carrion Crow of India. For a full biography of this evil-doer, I must refer you to that charming little book, "My Indian Garden." Nothing is safe from him; what he cannot take by force he obtains by fraud. "His tameness is shocking;" it is not the humble trustfulness of innocence, but the disagreeable familiarity of a bully. Many of the Crow kind have fine plumage; the Jays and Magpies, and even the birds of Paradise, are distant cousins of theirs, but for all that their destructive and mischievous habits have made them anything but favourites. A Raven was an emblem of the old

ırthern sea-kings, whose sails carried desolation far and wide, while if the demon mischief is embodied anywhere, it is in the Magpie. We have all heard the ry of the poor servant-maid who suffered so cruelly for the misdeeds of a Magpie ore the real thief was discovered.

A few years ago at a village called Burwarton in Shropshire, a tame Magpie, onging to a cottager, brought in one day a small glittering object, which on amination proved to be a curious old gold coin. No one could imagine where had come from. The next day it brought another, and then another, and, after ing carefully watched for some time, it turned out that the Magpie had discovered most valuable collection of old coins, which had lain buried in the earth for cen-ies. It is a pleasure to hear one story which redounds to the credit of a Magpie ong so many to its disadvantage. Magpies in this country, in their natural te, are very watchful, shy birds. They breed very near houses, but will allow no e to approach them within fifty or sixty yards. It is said that this fear of man-d is produced by the Magpie being persecuted by farmers and gamekeepers, and only shown in England. In countries where it is protected it becomes quite miliar and at its ease: in Norway especially, where they hop about the houses, d even inside the doors, in a half-tame state. In the town of Drontheim they ke their nests on churches and warehouses, and are never molested or pelted by e children.

Ravens have the same propensity as their black and white cousins for hiding ngs, particularly any glittering object, such as keys, glass, silver, or any little icle of jewelry. The mystical character attaching to various members of the ow family is no doubt partly owing to the fact of their living to a very great age. this case, as with mankind, it is fancied that

> Old experience doth attain
> To something like prophetic strain.

e long life of a Raven has long been proverbial, as may be gathered from the lowing curious old lines, of which the author is unknown; at least I have never en able to discover him:—

> A Raven once an acorn took
> From Basan's tallest, stoutest tree,
> And hid it in a secret nook,
> Then lived another oak to see.
> * * * *
> Thus melancholy luries hope.

is last line is often quoted, but the preceding ones are not generally known.

FOLLOWING THE PLOUGH.

Certainly nothing can give one a grander idea of a Raven's term of life than its burying an acorn and living to see it grown into a tall spreading oak-tree!

The superstition about the croak of a Raven being a foreboding of evil still continues in some counties. An uncle of mine was talking to a collier in Shropshire not many years ago, when they heard a Raven croak overhead. "Ah! sir," said the collier, "I don't like to hear that." "Why not?" asked my uncle. "It means an accident in the pit," answered the man.

People who live in towns, or are not in the habit of observing birds very closely, are apt to fancy that a Crow and a Rook are the same bird; and certainly at a little distance they look much alike, but their habits and characters are quite distinct. The Crow is, in fact, more like a Raven than a Rook. Like Ravens, Crows go about in pairs instead of in large flocks as Rooks do. Both look black, but the Rook's plumage is really a rich dark purple, and that of the Crow a greenish blue. The social habits of Rooks are most curious and interesting. It is a well-known fact that they have a regular system of formally trying, condemning, and executing members of the community who have transgressed its laws. What is still more curious, Crows—generally, as I have said, solitary in their habits—will occasionally assemble together for this purpose. Meetings have been seen in Scotland in which they collect in great numbers, as if they had all been summoned for the occasion. A few of the flock sit with drooping heads, and others seem as grave as judges, while others, again, are exceedingly active and noisy. In the course of about an hour they disperse, and it is not uncommon to find, after they have flown away, one or two left dead on the spot! Sometimes these meetings will last for a day or two before the object, whatever it may be, is accomplished, and Crows continue to arrive and join the assembly from all directions. At length a tremendous noise ensues, and shortly after they fall upon one or two individuals and put them to death, after which they disperse quietly. If we could only find out what the nature of the crimes committed may be, and how the sentence is passed, what a wonderfully strange interest it would have!

THE PARROT-HOUSE.

THE Parrot family forms a most attractive group of birds. It includes not only the Parrots, but their near relatives the Paroquets, Macaws, Lories, and Cockatoos; and some of the family are found wild in every quarter of the globe but Europe, Australia and South America yielding the greatest variety. They are, as a rule,

climbers like our English woodpeckers, and may be seen not only walking up the stems of the loftiest trees, but hanging below the branches quite at their ease, as you may see a tomtit on an apple. This is owing chiefly to the form of their feet

"FETTERED."

and claws; but many of them help themselves in climbing by the upper point of their hooked bills, which are very strong, fit to crack and open the hard-shelled nuts, fruit-stones, and seeds that form their principal food.

No tribe of birds, I think, shows a greater variety of beauty than this. They

have not indeed that rich metallic lustre which we admire in the plumage of the peacock and Impeyan pheasant, the Mexican Trogons, and some of the brightest humming-birds; but you may look at twenty different species in succession all quite different, yet all beautiful. The brightest in colouring as well as the largest are the Macaws from Brazil, with their long tails, hooked bills, and gaudy plumes of blue, red, and yellow wonderfully blended. But none of these, I think, are really so lovely as the Australian King Parrot, green above and rose-coloured below, the two rich tints seeming to melt into each other. The little Rosella Parrot, common through great part of New South Wales, and often kept as a pet in England, is pretty in quite a different way, being painted with a great variety of colours curiously mixed, but producing on the whole a very pleasing effect. Other species show their beauty chiefly when seen in large flocks. When the maize is ripe in Australia, you may see several thousands of White Cockatoos together on the wing, and there can hardly be a more beautiful sight than the white sheet of snowy pinions flashing in the sun, gilded here and there by the gleam of a golden crest; and the effect is quite dazzling when in some rocky pass a close-packed flock of the Golden-green Grass Paroquets shoots across your track.

But it is not chiefly for their beauty that we admire these strange creatures; they interest us because they show tempers like our own, and still more because they partake sometimes in a strange degree of the human gift of speech. A raven, a magpie, a starling, now and then a bullfinch, will learn to articulate a few words; but there are several species of Parrots and Cockatoos which not only learn many words and sentences, but apply them quite correctly. The Grey Parrots from Western Africa are generally the best talkers, and being long-lived, they sometimes gather great stores of language. To this species belonged Colonel O'Kelly's famous Parrot in the last century, of which such wonders are related, and which was dissected by learned men after its death, to examine its organs of speech. Next to the Grey Parrot for the gift of language is the Green Parrot from the River Amazon. Some of the Cockatoos are very clever birds, and show strong feelings and expressive gestures, as well as a great power of imitating sounds. It is said that the most remarkable bird now living is a Corella Cockatoo at the Port Phillip Club Hotel, Melbourne. He has certainly a great deal to say for himself, and has picked up a great deal of conversation by listening to the people at the bar of the hotel. He can sing two songs quite correctly through, both time and words. He is a great dancer, and keeps time perfectly in his steps. The worst of him is that his phrases are very mixed, and he has learnt a good deal of low slang.

It is a curious thing that among the Parrot family, as among the human race, gifted individuals occasionally spring up where they could least be expected. I dare

say you have seen a cageful of those delicate little Paroquets, with plumage bea fully pencilled in yellow and green, called "Budgerigars." They have weak voi and seldom get beyond a tiny chirp; yet one of these little fellows, known to father, made quite a sensation by his cleverness. He knew many people by si and was always the first to announce their appearance. "Look sharp there—her the old Colonel coming!" "Holloa! Counsellor, where 's your wig?" and so w

"FREE."

various visitors. His death, as related by a lady who was actually present, very remarkable. She was sitting in the drawing-room, and the bird's cage h in the verandah outside. A hawk dashed down at the cage, and without touch so scared the little pet that it fell to the bottom quite helpless. She ran to assistance, and found it unwounded, but dying. "Poor Budgee! Budgee 's dea were its last words. Happily the stories of these birds are generally comical,

not sad like this. I will tell you two or three which I had from persons who knew the particular bird, and could vouch for the facts.

A Lady R—— in Nottinghamshire had a Parrot which was very jealous of her favourite dog. The bird would imitate her voice perfectly, calling "Nero! Nero!" and when Nero came bounding in, would cry in an altered tone, "Get out, you brute!" Another Parrot in the same neighbourhood found his way into the kitchen, where some cockles were lying, just cleaned for sauce. Poll ate a few, and tumbled the rest about. The cook coming in with the saucepan, saw what had happened, and crying out, "You've been among the cockles, have you?" very cruelly threw a shower of hot water over him, scalding the feathers off his head. Some days after a bald old gentleman was chatting in the drawing-room, when the bird sidled up to him and said, "You've been among the cockles, have you?" I dare say Poll was only repeating words he had good reason to remember, but his mistress always declared he alluded to his own bald skull.

Cockatoos are clever actors as well as talkers. A lady in New South Wales had a very lively one, which occasionally lost its temper, and had recently bitten her. She was showing the bird to a visitor as it climbed along the ridge of a low outhouse, saying, "Step up, Cocky! That's the way, pretty boy," when suddenly she presented the wounded finger to him, saying in a severe tone, "Who did that?" The bird dropped from its perch as if in a swoon—just holding on by one leg—and said in a faint voice, "Cocky!" Another of these birds was very jealous of a gentleman who used to imitate ducks quacking, pigeons cooing, and other sounds, which "Joey" could not successfully copy. Whenever this gentleman passed along the street where the cage was hung, Joey used at once to begin at the top of his voice, rattling out all the words and sounds he knew, one after another, "Bow-wow," "Pretty Joey," "Pot o' beer," "There is nae luck about the house," "Who are you?" "Come—kiss—kiss—Joey wont bite," "What's up now?" and so through all his vocabulary—fairly tiring himself before his enemy was out of sight.

THE ELEPHANT-HOUSE.

FAMILIAR as the Elephant has been to us in pictures and stories as long as we can remember anything, I think it is impossible ever to see this great creature without being struck afresh with the wonder of him. After I have been all round the Gardens examining closely the strange birds and beasts—some of them always

new to me—and come suddenly upon this moving mountain pacing the walk with a crowd of delighted children on its back, it always fills me with a new sensation of amazement, and I think, "After all, there is nothing in creation so marvellous as an Elephant." The fact of such an immensely powerful creature obeying the orders of its pigmy keeper, condescending to kneel at his bidding and move in any direction he ordains, is alone a never-ceasing wonder; and when one remembers that he is not only enormously large and strong, but has more cleverness and intelligence than any other animal, his submission seems almost inexplicable. Then there is something so very *odd*-looking about an Elephant. He seems put together in a

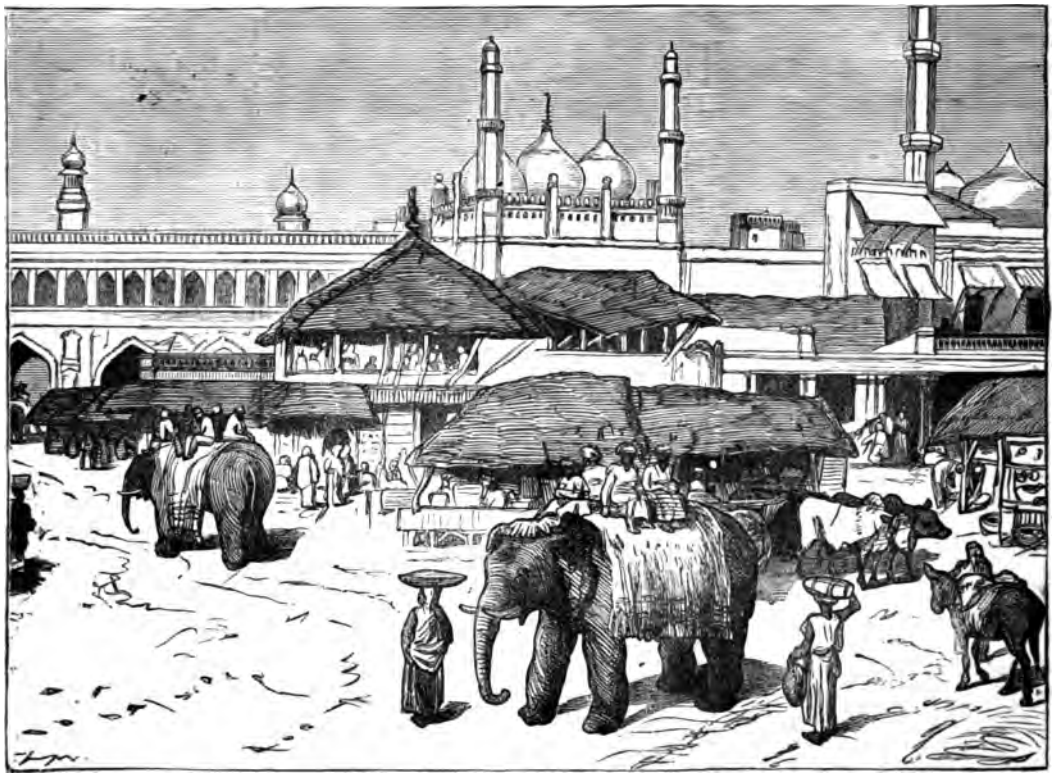
RIDING ON AN ELEPHANT.

loose uncertain sort of way, more like a creature in a pantomime than an actual living animal; and when you consider that this immense frame is supported on a purely vegetable diet, the strangeness seems complete.

There are endless stories of the intelligence of Elephants, their attachment to their keepers, and the marks of affection they show them. We have all heard of the Elephant who took charge of the little child when its mother was out, rocking the cradle with its trunk, and drawing it gently back by its clothes when it crawled too far. The author of "Friends in Fur and Feathers" gives a charming account of a young Elephant who belonged to an army-surgeon in Ceylon, to whom he was quite devoted, fetching his tea-kettle—which he carried very carefully with his trunk stretched out as far as possible because he had once scalded his toes—and doing all kinds of useful things for his master. Amongst other things, he would accompany

him round the hospital wards, and administer the pills to the men, lifting them by the end of his trunk and blowing them down their throats!

Sometimes Elephants will be most self-denying for the sake of their masters. In one of the Indian encampments, when food was very scarce and man and beast were on short commons, a certain sort of savoury balls called mosaulla balls were provided for the Elephants, whose strength it was very necessary to keep up. In spite of this they grew thin and weak, and it was suspected, and in course of time



IN AN INDIAN TOWN.

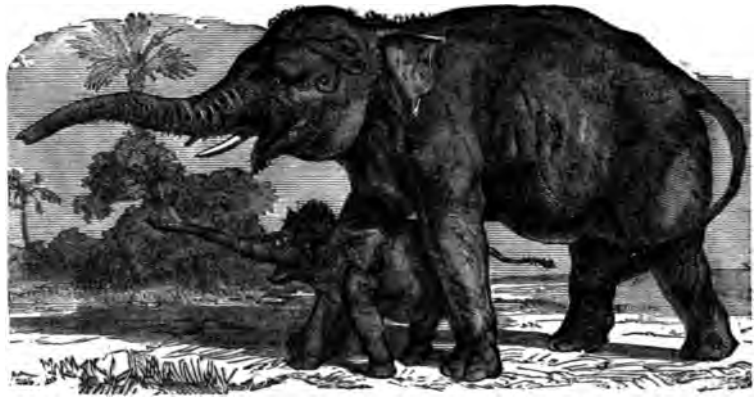
proved, that the keepers ate these balls themselves. So inspectors were set to watch that the animals were properly fed. The Elephants grew strong again, and appeared in good condition for some time, when they began to fall off again. The inspectors were much puzzled at this, as they found on examining the balls that they were just as good as ever, and saw them given to the animals every day. At length it was discovered that the keepers had trained these good creatures to take the food of which they were so fond, in their trunks, and put it in their mouths when the inspectors were present without eating it, and as soon as they were gone to give back the balls to their keepers!

In the pantomime of "Bluebeard" performed in London last Christmas, there wa a very funny made-up Elephant, supposed to be a tame animal belonging to Blue beard. He did not, however, at all approve of his master's ways, and never lost a opportunity of giving him a sly blow with his trunk as if in play, though reall hurting him a good deal, while he was always gentle and affectionate to Fatima Bluebeard was, in reality, dreadfully afraid of him, though he did not like to sho it, particularly in Fatima's presence; and was continually calling out, "Nast forward thing!" when the Elephant came near. This discrimination of characte on the part of the Elephant, even as regards his own master, is no exaggeratior These creatures understand perfectly well the difference between a really kind hearted keeper and one who tricks or deceives them, and will sometimes, thoug not often, for they are very forbearing, take ample revenge. One has been know to trample his keeper to death for playing him an unkind trick. But such extrem revenges are rare: they generally content themselves with squirting water over th offender, or some such mild but unpleasant retort. A painter was making a pictur of an Elephant kept in a menagerie at Versailles. He wanted him in a particula attitude, holding his trunk raised up in the air with his mouth open, for which objec the painter's boy threw fruit into his mouth; but as he oftener pretended to do thi than actually threw the fruit, the beast got angry. He turned aside, took up quantity of water in his trunk, and deliberately squirted it over the picture!

A cousin of mine who was in India for a long time has given me a curiou account of the intelligence of an Elephant of which he himself was witness. It wa about fifty years ago in Burmah, when he was just beginning life in the arm and serving with our troops in the Burmese War. The country was in gener covered with marshy rice swamps, and after the rains the grass would grow in ran abundance to the height of ten or twelve feet, in thick reeds like beanstalks. T make the country passable, high and broad embankments were thrown up, formin roads. The earth that was used in these embankments left a broad ditch or can alongside, which in the rainy season was filled with water. A detachment of ou troops, marching along one of these, pitched a camp for the night near the canal, a this season almost if not quite dry. One of the Elephants used in transporting th baggage of the detachment found its way into the bed of the canal; the claye surface gave way under the immense weight of the animal, which gradually san into the yielding quicksands. All its efforts to extricate itself were unsuccessfu and by the time its danger was discovered, not much except the head and trun remained above the surface. It was impossible to pass ropes round it, and all th ingenuity of the men failed to invent any method of relief. Every moment rescu became more difficult, and the poor animal's position more hopeless. At last som

ELEPHANT-SHOOTING.

one suggested throwing it some grass for food. Accordingly a quantity of the coarse reed-like grass mentioned before was cut, tied up in a bundle, and thrown to the Elephant. Instead, however, of eating it, as was intended, the creature seized the bundle in its trunk and crushed it down through the mud. The bystanders took the hint, and plied it with faggots of grass or whatever came to hand with the utmost rapidity. The Elephant used them all in the same way, pressing them down through the yielding soil, and planting them under his feet and all round him, until he gradually formed a solid standing-ground, and literally built himself out of his dangerous position.



MOTHER AND CHILD.

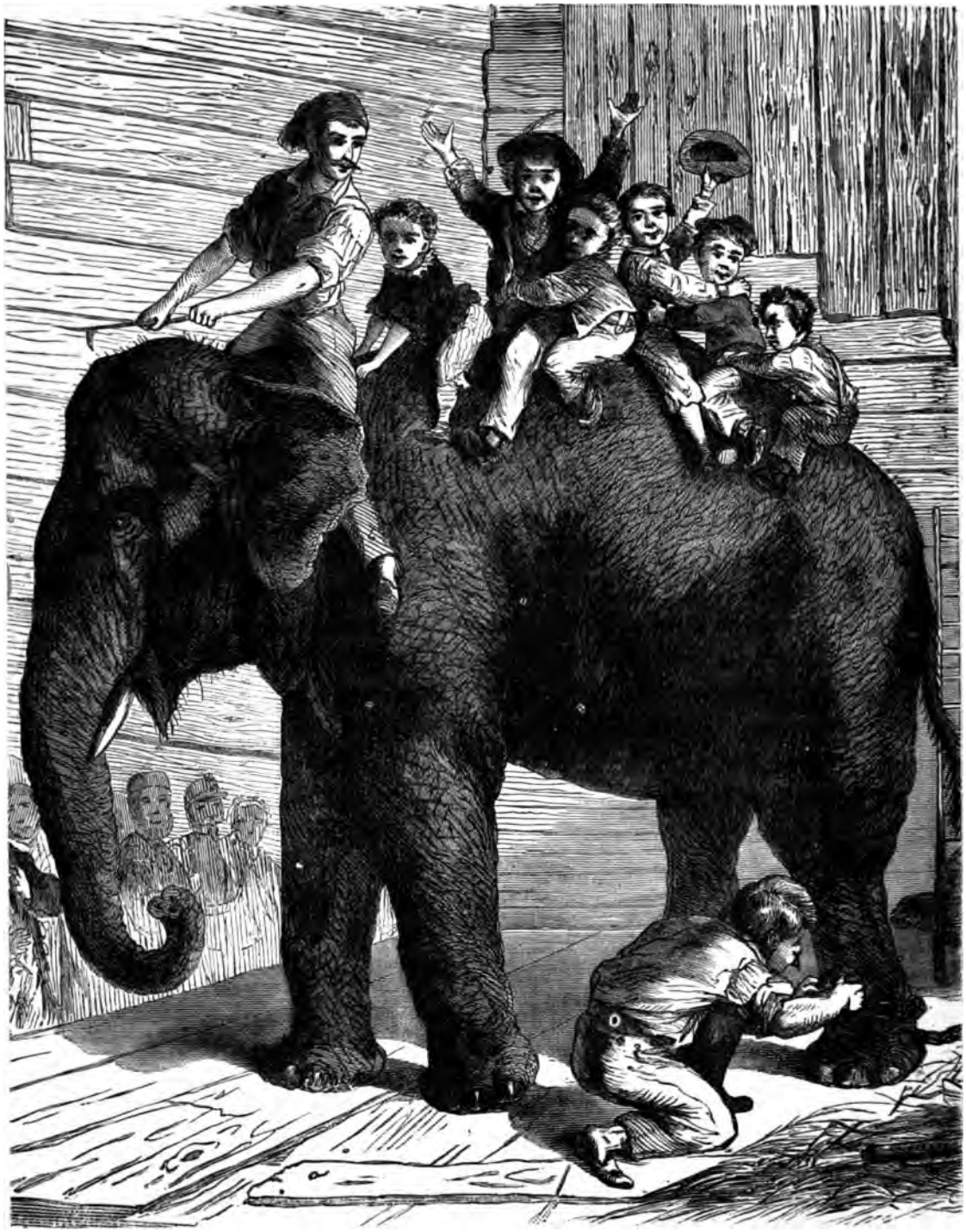
On another occasion during the same campaign, a Sepoy regiment, under the command of European officers, was marching through some hilly country along a narrow path which wound its way up the hill-side. The path was bordered on each side by thick jungle, and was so narrow that the men had to proceed in single file, the officers heading the party. Suddenly an alarm of wild Elephants was raised from the rear, and, looking back, the English officers saw an Elephant rushing along the path, from which every man of the regiment had disappeared, having sought shelter in the bordering jungle. One of the party had had time to load his gun before they all sprang aside to make way for the passage of the Elephant,—a female, followed by a young one. As soon as they had passed, the gun was fired, and struck the large Elephant, who was so infuriated by the pain that she turned, and seizing her young one in her trunk, dashed it to the ground, and killed it at once in her rage.

Wild Elephants abounded in Burmah in those days, and appear to have been very dangerous when attacked or irritated. A young clerk, hearing that a number of wild animals had come down to some neighbouring water to drink, ordered his

pony, and, armed with a gun, set out to attack them. The Elephants immediately turned, and killed both him and his horse before rescue was possible. At another place, also in Burmah, an English officer, who was left alone in command of a native detachment, left the camp one day walking, accompanied by two orderlies and a little dog. After walking two or three miles, he was about returning to camp, when he found that a herd of wild Elephants had collected in his rear, and were becoming much excited by his dog, who began barking at and worrying them. Seeing that escape by the path was impossible, the party scrambled up the hill-side, followed by the dog and pursued by the Elephants. They succeeded in finding a large hole or cave with an entrance too small to admit an Elephant, in which they all took refuge. Here they remained for hours, the Elephants keeping guard over them outside. At last night began to fall, and one of the orderlies volunteered to creep out and endeavour to make his way through the Elephants to obtain assistance from the camp. Favoured by the darkness, he succeeded in the dangerous attempt, and returned in time to effect the rescue of his fellow-prisoners.

Mr. Bruce has given us a very curious account of Elephant-hunting in Abyssinia by natives who live in the woods and exist entirely on the beasts they kill, chiefly Elephants and rhinoceroses. They hunt on horseback, generally without a saddle, two men on one horse; the one in front who has the bridle with only a short stick in his hand, and the one behind him with a broadsword. As soon as the Elephant is found feeding, the horseman rides before him as near his face as possible; or, if he flies, crosses him in all directions, calling out, "I am such a man" (mentioning his own name). "This is my horse that has such a name. I killed your father in such a place, and your grandfather in such another place, and I am now come to kill you; you are but an ass in comparison of them." This nonsense he really believes the Elephant understands; who, furious at the noise close to him, tries to seize the man with his trunk, following the horse everywhere. After having made him turn once or twice, the horseman rides close up alongside of him, and drops his companion just behind on the off-side; and while he engages the Elephant's attention upon the horse, the footman behind gives him a stroke with the sword just above the heel, on what is called in man the "tendon Achilles," which completely disables him. The same traveller gives a most touching account of a young Elephant who rushed to the defence of its wounded mother.

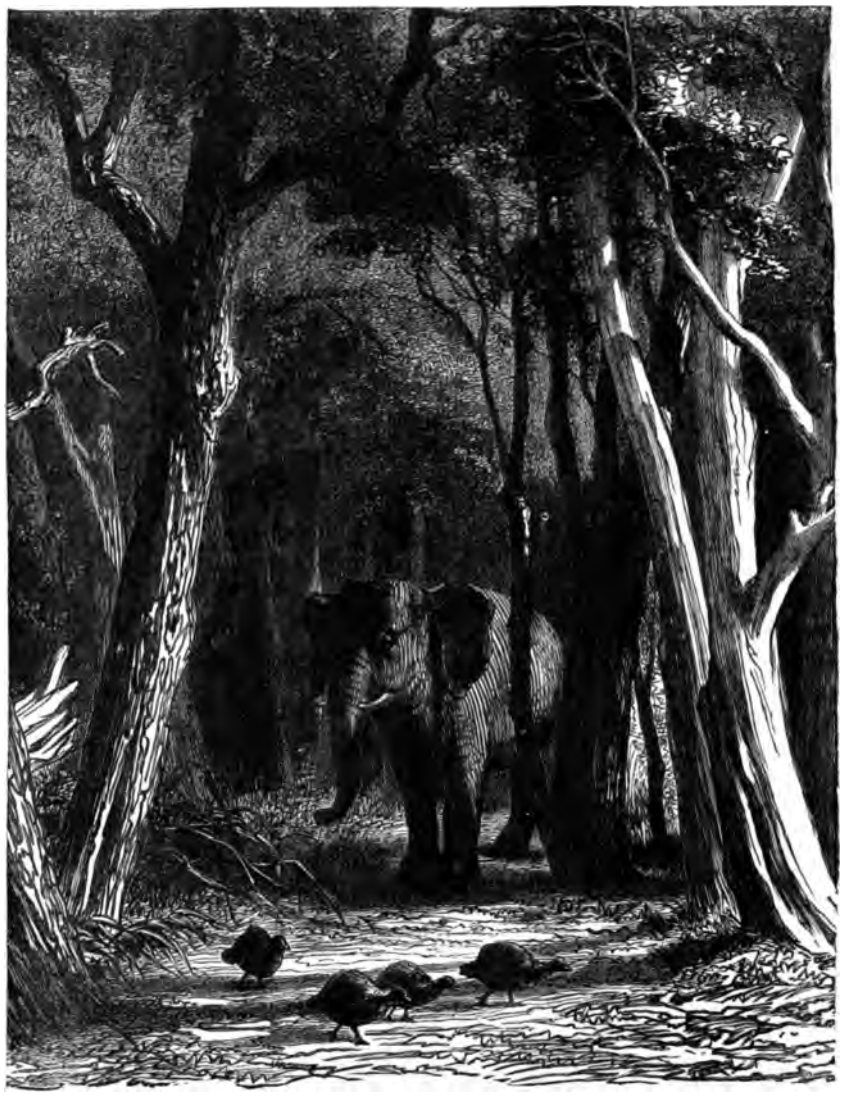
The Elephant is a native of Asia and Africa, and is not to be found in its natural state in any part of Europe. The African Elephant is not in the present day used in a tamed state, though there is no doubt that in former days they were used by the Carthaginians, and those exhibited in the Roman arenas must have been African. The largest African Elephant now in the Zoological Gardens is believed to have



"ON HIS BACK—HOORAY!"

been the first ever brought to England. The Asiatic Elephant is generally a far less formidable animal than his African relative. The size of the latter is greater, his tusks heavier, his skull thicker and harder, and it is much more difficult to kill him with a single shot. Moreover, he is much more apt to show fight or charge, as it termed, when attacked. Now and then a "rogue Elephant" in India will separate himself from the herd, waylay travellers, break down village enclosures, and do all sorts of mischief for mischief's sake. It was by one of these rogues that a most skilful sportsman, Lieutenant Wedderburn, was killed; but, generally speaking, the Asiatic Elephants are comparatively timid, peaceful creatures, and do their utmost to keep out of man's way. Those of Ceylon might be called quite harmless, were it not for the damage which they sometimes do to plantations. Strangely enough, they very seldom have tusks. A sportsman may kill a hundred without killing a single tusker. This island, however, affords the best opportunities both for seeing the huge creatures in their wild state and for witnessing their capture. Every now and then a hunt is ordered to take some wild ones for Government use. Sir Emerson Tennant, in his work on Ceylon, gives a very interesting account of one of these Elephant-hunts. Fires are kept up day and night on both sides of the line along which the herd are driven, while parties of natives make loud noises and show themselves here and there to prevent the creatures from breaking through. But I think the most interesting part of the proceedings must be the very conclusion, when the wild Elephants have at length been driven into a strong wooden enclosure called a *keddah*, and trained female Elephants are introduced to make prisoners of the alarmed and infuriated creatures one by one. Two of these females will place themselves on each side of a wild male, caressing and coaxing him with their trunks, till he is quite off his guard, while practised natives—who show wonderful courage and address—creep close to his legs, and noose them in loops of strong cable, fastened at the other end to a tree. When he finds out the trick that has been played him, he rushes about madly, making the wildest efforts to get away; but the tame ones now close in upon him, and by their strength, aided by the fetters on his legs, he is soon overpowered. He is then left for awhile, till hunger and fatigue have tamed him. Elephants are, I believe, less used now than they formerly were by our Government in India. Railways no doubt have taken a great deal of work off their shoulders. Our officers, however, still employ them a good deal for hunting purposes, and some of the native princes still keep a considerable number for use or show. It must have been a fine sight when, on the Prince of Wales's progress through India, a long train of these animals richly caparisoned, one of them carrying the Prince and his suite, forded a broad river and wound in a stately procession far along the valley.

Elephants live long and seem to grow wiser the longer they live. They may taught almost anything, even to stand on their heads, like those exhibited in Lon two years ago, or to dance on the tight-rope. Of all the stories of their saga and good sense, the funniest I think is that told in a French book—"*Les Anim*



THE ELEPHANT AT HOME.

Célèbres"—of one who, after being beaten by his keeper for dancing badly, was seen practising his steps in a meadow by moonlight. The prettiest, perhaps, is t of the mother Elephant, who forcibly held down the wounded young one while *surgeon extracted* the ball and dressed the wound.

The fact is, that Elephants exhibit almost as many traits of character as human beings; and, no doubt, those traits can be well studied when they are in captivity. But, to appreciate the picturesque grandeur of the creature, he must be seen in his native wilds "in the spicy lands where the skies are bright." There amongst the luxuriant tropical vegetation, where the "heavy-scented blossoms" hang, and the gorgeous birds and butterflies flash, with the glorious blue sky over his head, and a sunshine that penetrates even his tough skin and warms and gladdens his heart, he roams a mild and mighty monarch. In such a scene as is described by Southey in the "Curse of Kehama," one would like to see him best:—

Trampling his path through wood and brake
And canes which crackling fall before his way,
And tassel-grass, where silvery feathers play,
On comes the Elephant to slake
His thirst at noon in yon pellucid springs.
Lo! from his trunk upturned, aloft he flings
The grateful shower; and now
Plucking the broad-leaved bough
Of yonder plane, with wavy motion slow
Fanning the languid air,
He moves it to and fro.

THE RHINOCEROS.

The Rhinoceros inhabits the same countries as the Elephant. He is also wonderful to look upon, but he is certainly neither an interesting nor an intelligent animal, nor is he beautiful. A pig-like head with two little dull eyes; a short thin tail with a few stiff hairs at the end; a huge uncouth body covered with a hard impenetrable skin like armour; and four short, stout, strong legs,—such is his

outward appearance. He has a portentous appetite, and likes wallowing in th mire like a pig. He is of a solitary disposition, and wanders in moist marsh ground near the river. He is neither carnivorous nor ferocious, or very wild, but totally rude and untractable. It is said that the expense of food and journey for Rhinoceros from Bengal to England amounts to nearly a thousand pounds. I don think the difficulty of importing him is a matter of much regret, for on looking a him one certainly does not feel inclined to say like my friend, who mistook th weasel for a squirrel, "Dear little things, I wish there were more of them!"

The Rhinoceros is enormously strong and powerful, and can quite hold his ow against the Elephant, with whom he has frequent encounters of a terrific nature.

THE BEAVER-POND.

It is impossible to help liking and admiring these sensible, industrious creature who build strong comfortable houses for the winter, and can live together in larg colonies without quarreling. They are wise enough, however, to have separa apartments for each family, but all join together to build their establishment an keep their water-dams in order. Their tools are their fore teeth, which they use lik pincers and chisels, cutting a thick twig as clean across as could be done with a knif Their fore paws are most useful instruments, with which they dig, soften, and wor the clay. Their hind feet, which are webbed, are swimming-paddles, and their broa tails are rudders in the water or supporting props when needed. Two or thre hundred will assemble together, and having chosen a suitable spot, which is general a level piece of ground with a small rivulet running through it, they divide int companies to work. Some cut down trees of considerable size, which they lay across the dam or form into piles, while others roll down to the water, where they make holes for receiving the ends, in which they place them upright and secure them Others bring twigs to interweave and twist among the piles, and some collect large quantities of earth, stones, clay, and other solid materials. The edifice is raised on the piles, either round or oval in shape, with an arched top, which gives it the appearance of a dome outside. Inside it is like an oven. The size is proportioned to the number of the intended inhabitants. Twelve feet in length and ten in breadth are sufficient for eight or ten Beavers. All these works are finished in August o

A BEAVER DAM.

September, after which the Beavers furnish themselves with provisions. All the summer season they feast on whatever fruits and plants the country produces, but on the approach of winter they begin to stock their houses with the bark of different trees, willow, poplar, and birch being their favourites. They are very fond also of the root of the water-lily.

The novelist Cooper gives a charming description of them in the "Last of the Mohicans," when Duncan comes across a colony of them for the first time, and takes it for an inhabited village. "A hundred earthen dwellings stood on the margin of the lake, and even in its water, as though the latter had overflowed its usual banks. Their rounded roofs, admirably moulded for defence against the weather, denoted more of industry and forethought than the natives were wont to bestow on their regular habitations, much less on those they occupied for the temporary purposes of hunting and war. In short, the whole village or town, whichever it might be termed, possessed more of method and neatness of execution than the white men had been accustomed to believe belonged to the Indian habits. It appeared, however, to be deserted—at least, so thought Duncan for many minutes, but at length he fancied he discovered several human forms advancing towards him on all fours, and apparently dragging in their train some heavy and, as he was quick to apprehend, some formidable engine. Just then a few dark-looking heads gleamed out of the dwellings, and the place seemed suddenly alive with beings, which, however, glided from cover to cover so swiftly as to allow no opportunity of examining their humours." Poor Duncan was very unnecessarily alarmed, and got well laughed at by his friend Hawk-eye afterwards for his mistake. You may remember, too, the delightful Beavers in "Hiawatha," and the description of their home in a pond of quiet water, "Where knee-deep the trees were standing, where the water-lilies floated." No wonder the mischief-making "Pau-Puk-Keewis," escaping from his enemies, longed to take refuge in this pleasant, peaceful home, and begged to be changed into a Beaver. The good creatures consulted together, as one could imagine they would be sure to do in any case where their joint household arrangements were concerned, and agreed to receive him. Then comes the pretty description of their heads rising through the water till the pond seemed "full of black and shining faces," and then

> Down into the pond among them
> Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis;
> Black became his shirt of deer-skin,
> Black his moccasins and leggings;
> In a broad black tail behind him
> Spread his fox-tails and his fringes—
> He was changed into a beaver!
> Thus into the clear brown water

Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis;
Found the bottom covered over
With the trunks of trees and branches,
Hoards of food against the winter,
Piles and heaps against the famine;
Found the lodge with open doorway
Leading into spacious chambers.

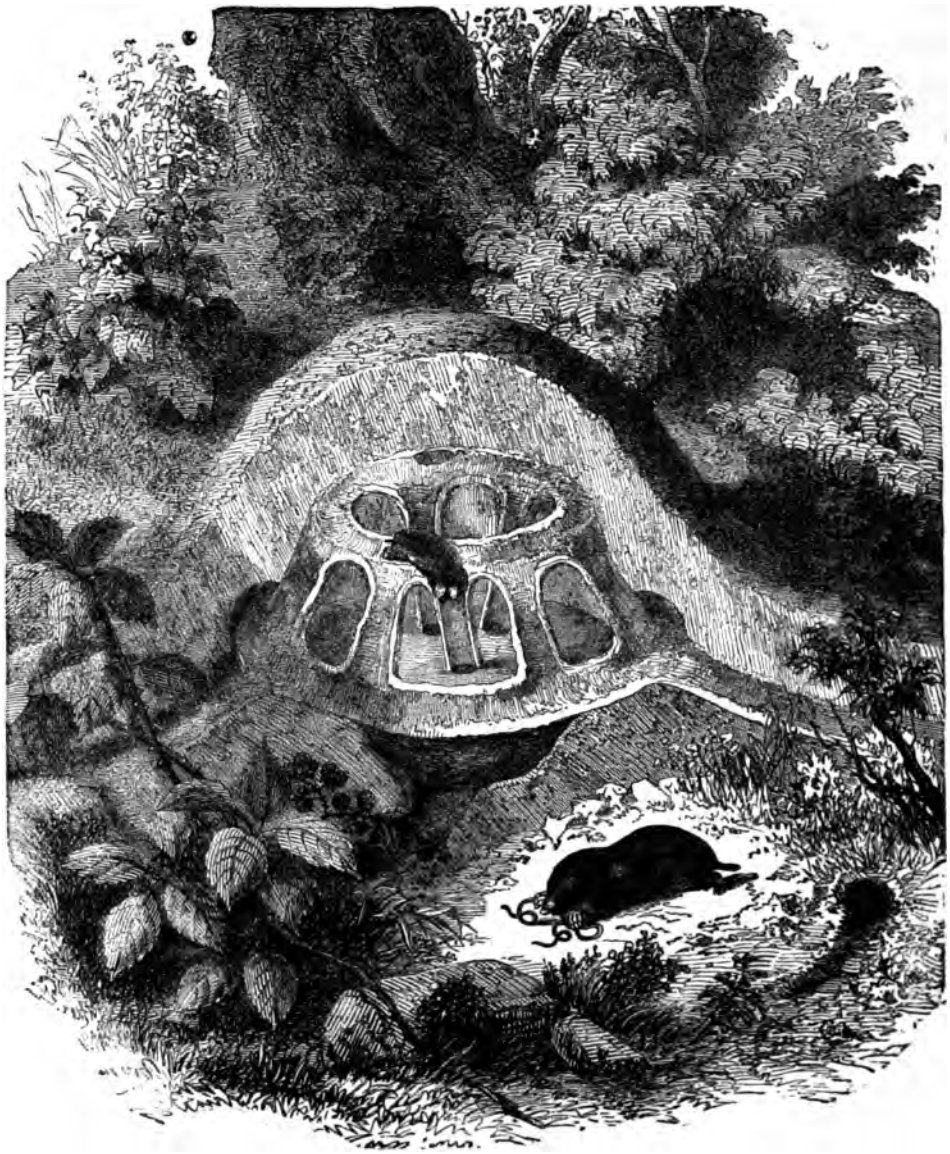
One expects so sociable an animal as the Beaver to be affectionate in disposition, and so he is said to be. There is a touching story of two young ones which were taken alive and brought to a factory in Hudson's Bay. They both throve very well till one was killed accidentally. From that time the survivor pined. It moaned most piteously, and would take no food till it died. In another place a pair were kept together in a room, where they lived as happily as possible till one died. The other did not seem at first to understand its loss. It brought food, and laid it before its dead companion. At last, finding it did not stir, it covered the body with twigs and leaves, and pined away, and would not eat for a long time.

Mr. Broderip, the naturalist, has written a delightful account of a Beaver which he tamed when very young. His name was "Binny," and he would always answer when he was called with a little cry, and come to his owner. He used to lie stretched out on the hearthrug, sometimes on his back and sometimes on his side, but always near his master. The building instinct showed itself directly he was let out of his cage. His strength was great even before he was half-grown, and he would drag along a large broom or a warming-pan, grasping the handle in his teeth, so that the load came over his shoulder. The long and large materials were always taken first; and two of the longest were generally laid crosswise, with one of the ends of each touching the wall, and the others projecting out into the room. The space between the crossed brushes and the wall it would fill up with hand-brushes, rush baskets, books, boots, sticks, cloths, or anything it could carry. As the work grew high, Binny supported himself by his tail; and he would often, after laying on one of the building materials, sit and gaze at his work as if he were considering and judging it. Sometimes after this he would shift the materials, and sometimes appear satisfied and leave them as they were. This work seemed intended for a dam; his own dwelling-place he made under a chest of drawers, which stood high enough on its feet to admit him, filling up the space between the feet with bits of coal, hay, cloth, or anything he could pick up. Then he carried in all the soft things he could find to make a nest. Binny carried all the small and light articles between his right fore leg and his chin, walking on the other three legs. He was very fond of dipping his tail in water, which seemed to satisfy his thirst. He ate bread and milk and sugar, and all kinds of fruits.

Beavers are said to have once inhabited our own country: they have now disappeared almost entirely from Europe; even in North America, with its countless wilds and solitary streams, they are becoming very scarce, retiring farther and farther into the cold wilderness of the North-west. The great fur companies have now but a small traffic in their skins. At the beginning of this century, beaver hats were universally worn by both sexes; an imitation in silk has now taken their place. The Beaver's fur is remarkable for combining closeness, shortness, and a sort of silky softness in the texture. Something of the same qualities may be traced in the fur of that strange amphibious creature the Platypus, or Water-Mole, who takes the place of the Beaver in the Australian rivers. Those killed in the colder waters of Tasmania have particularly rich and glossy skins. The learned name of this creature, a frightfully long one by-the-bye, "*Ornithorhyncus paradoxus*," means a strange beast with a bird's bill, and describes its form accurately enough. Its popular name of "Water-Mole" refers to the clever construction of its burrows, with their outlets and store-chambers, in which it may be said to resemble our English Mole, though the latter has the utmost distaste for the water. The "little gentleman in black velvet" has, however, a further resemblance to his Australian namesake. He is like him in the peculiarity of his soft glossy skin, as well as his house. Perhaps you may not know who first gave the Mole the name I have just used for him. You may remember that King William III. met with his death through his horse stumbling over a molé-hill. The Jacobites, secretly rejoicing in the catastrophe, used to drink the health of the Mole under the name of "the little gentleman in black velvet."

Our common Mole is such a clever little fellow that we really must not pass him over without some more notice, though if we want to see him in the Zoological Gardens, I am afraid we shall have some trouble in finding him; certainly there is no cage provided for him. If we could only look down into the ground, under the mounds of earth which the Mole throws up, we should see a house as wonderful in its way as that of the Beaver, all built by himself with his little pink fingers, which are specially formed for digging purposes. Each Mole has its own subterranean manor, its hunting-ground, and its lodges, and this ground is traversed by high-road tunnels, through which it travels from one part to another, all branching off from a central fortress, its ordinary residence, which is quite distinct, and often a long way off from the nest where the young ones are reared. One high-road occasionally serves several Moles, but they never trespass on each other's preserves. When two meet in one of these passages it is rather awkward: as there is not room enough to pass, one must always retreat, and sometimes fierce battles ensue. The chief prey *of the Mole* is the wire-worm, but he sometimes comes to the surface of the ground

at night, when he will devour frogs and mice, and anything he can find. Farmers are not fond of Moles, because their mining sometimes wastes seed that has been sown, and because the hills of earth they make interfere with the mowing of the



THE "LITTLE GENTLEMAN IN BLACK VELVET."

grass in the meadows; but they know that they are also useful in their way, as they clear the ground of worms and grubs of all kinds, and improve the soil by digging it and turning it about. It used to be thought that Moles were blind, but they have really little black eyes deep-set in their heads, which answer their purpose in thei

underground life better than ordinary ones would. Their senses of smell and hearing are both very keen. The head of the Mole is formed with a strong bone in front, with which he pushes his way through the earth; while he burrows he lays his bristly tail over his back. They make nests for their young very like those of the wren, and very deep down in the ground. They are made of dry grass, sometimes mixed with green grass; the inside is formed of old dry leaves, frequently oak-leaves. A Mole was kept in a tub of earth for several days: he never came to the surface except for his food; he fed on bread, little pieces of roast meat, fruit, and other things, and drank water out of a cup sunk in the earth. He was very fierce, and when touched squeaked like a rat, and tried to bite with his sharp teeth.

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS-HOUSES.

"WHO would think, now, to look at us two," said the Hippopotamus in *Punch* to a pretty young girl gazing at him, "that you devoured bullocks and sheep, and I ate nothing but rice?" And certainly when you see this immensely powerful animal

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

open a monstrous mouth furnished with about thirty-six huge teeth, some of which are as much as twenty-seven inches long, and sometimes weigh nearly seven pounds, its vegetable diet does seem rather inconsistent with its appearance. The head *of a Hippopot*amus is enormous and its eyes very small in proportion, like those

of the elephant and rhinoceros. Its skin is so hard that the inhabitants of the interior of Africa are said to make shields of it that will repel a musket-ball. The first Hippopotamus ever seen in England was brought to the Zoological Gardens in 1850. The reason which determined the Society to procure one is curious enough. The fact that these strange creatures had been on many occasions exhibited by the

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS AT HOME.

emperors of Rome to the people in the circus, though 1,500 years ago, proved that the Hippopotamus could be transported from its haunts in the Nile with success. Accordingly, though it was certainly no easy task to carry out, a party of hunters was specially organized for the purpose from Cairo, and a very young Hippopotamus was caught in the White Nile among the reeds, where its mother had left it; and the creature, who weighs now at least four tons, was carried in the arms of the chief huntsman to the boat from which his men had landed. From Cairo the young

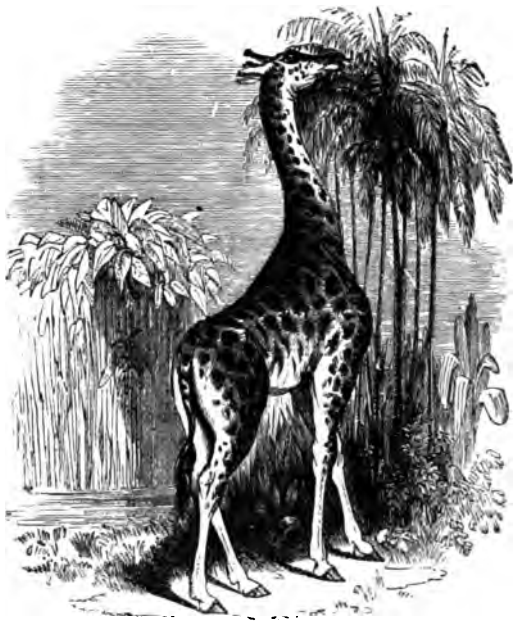
Hippopotamus proceeded in a Peninsular and Oriental steamer, in which there were most elaborate arrangements for his accommodation, and on the 25th of May, 1850, he landed on English soil. A special train conveyed him to London, and every station was crowded with people trying to see the illustrious visitor as he passed. They could see nothing, however, but the Arab keeper who attended him night and day, and who had to put his head out through the roof for want of air. This creature was called "Obaysch" from the place of his capture, and caused immense interest and excitement. In 1853 a wife arrived for him, which increased his popularity. She was called "Adhela." Eighteen years afterwards their first child was born, and you may imagine how pleased and interested every one was. But this young Hippopotamus did not live long, and another, born early the following year, died too. On the 5th of November, 1872, a healthy young Hippopotamus arrived, and is now nearly as large as her mother.

The name Hippopotamus is made, as I dare say you have heard, from two Greek words—*Hippos* a horse, and *potamos* a river; but there is nothing the least like a horse about the animal. He lives in the African swamps and rivers, and feeds chiefly on grass, which he generally devours at night, passing the greater part of the day in the cool fresh water, where he lolls about in a luxurious sort of way. Sometimes he comes up the country and makes fine havoc in the corn and rice-fields, cutting down the corn with his great teeth as if a scythe were at work. He is very quiet and inoffensive, leading—except for these depredations on the farmers—a very harmless life. He has few enemies, living, generally speaking, on easy terms even with the crocodiles. It is only when attacked that he becomes furious, and then he is certainly a formidable animal. One whose young ones had been fired at, followed a steamer, in which Sir Samuel Baker the great explorer was, all night in a frightful rage, and scrunched up a large boat at the side of the ship with her huge jaws as if it had been a biscuit! When alarmed, a Hippopotamus always takes to the water, under which he can remain for a long time—it is said as much as fifteen minutes, walking about on the bottom. Mrs. Hippopotamus takes her young one into the water very soon, carrying it sitting on her neck, which must be a very pretty sight.

Unwieldy as the Hippopotamus appears on land, yet he is wonderfully fitted by nature for his life in the deep rivers and lakes. If you look at his head you will see that his wart-like nostrils, his small round ears, and his little pig's eyes, are all placed quite at the top, so that he can see, hear, and smell, when his whole body is under water, without showing more than six little spots at the surface.

THE GIRAFFE-HOUSE.

THE Giraffe is another African animal, which fills one with fresh amazement every time one pays him a visit in his big stables. He is really a most beautiful and graceful animal, but one is apt to lose sight of this fact, and be struck principally with his extraordinary height and proportions. In his native wilds, seen at a little distance, it would appear to far greater advantage. The height of the Giraffe, from the crown of the head to the soles of the fore feet, is about seventeen feet; he far over-tops



THE GIRAFFE.

any other quadruped. Goldsmith says that a man on horseback could ride under his body without stooping. Perhaps if he were a very little man on a very little horse he could; but it is the enormous length of the creature's swan-like neck which is the most remarkable part of him. This wonderful neck, which measures at least half of the animal's whole height, enables him to reach the leaves of tall trees, which he gathers most delicately leaf by leaf, breaking them off with his long flexible tongue. He is said to prefer those of the mimosa and the wild apricot to any others. He also likes grass, but for grazing purposes his long neck is very inconvenient. He is obliged to straddle out his long legs and bend his neck in a semicircular form to reach grass and low growing herbs.

The Giraffe is sometimes called a Camelopard, because he is a little like a camel in the form of his head and neck, and because his coat is covered with irregular spots, something like those of the *pardus* or panther. He has horns nearly a foot long and quite straight, but these he never uses as weapons of defence, though he is fond of butting with them in play. When he wants to drink he generally kneels down. No animals in the Gardens are fonder of visitors than Giraffes; they are never the least put out by being stared at, but gaze down on the admiring crowd with their calm

GIRAFFE ATTACKED BY A LION.

large eyes, and would be delighted to accept morsels of cake and sugar if they were allowed to do so, but they are delicate creatures, and many sweetmeats are not good for them. It is also necessary to keep them very warm, and everything about them perfectly clean and comfortable, to preserve them in health. They are fed on hay, carrots, and onions. In their own country the only enemy they have to fear besides man is the lion. A lion will often surprise the great gentle creature when he comes to drink at the pools or fountains, and spring from his hiding-place on to the poor *fellow's back,* who rushes over the desert, mad with terror, with his terrible enemy

clinging to him, and holding him in his fatal grasp till he sinks from exhaustion and becomes an easy prey.

The Arabs hunt the Giraffe on their swift horses: during the first run the Giraffe

THE LION'S DRINKING-PLACE.

can beat them hollow, and if it reaches a mountain they have no chance of overtaking it, as its feet are like those of a goat, and it can bound over ravines where no horse can follow, but on the level plains of the desert the horses, accustomed to immense endurance and fatigue, can exhaust it in time.

The Arabs kill the Giraffe in order to eat it, being very fond of the meat, and also

for the skin, with which they make bucklers and sandals. The young Giraffes, which they catch alive for menageries, are soon tamed. When they have secured one, an Arab holds it by a long cord, and the hunters rest in the desert for three or four days, till it becomes quite used to them and will drink milk, to supply which they have brought a motherly camel. It is another instance of the curious protection afforded to animals by Nature, in their colour and general appearance, that in the distance a Giraffe looks so like a decayed tree that it frequently escapes notice. Sometimes, too, a group of weatherbeaten trunks are mistaken for a herd of Giraffes, even by the practised eyes of the natives.

Some years ago there was a terrible fire in the Giraffe-house, and two of the poor creatures died.

When the first Giraffe was brought to England, in the time of George IV., it made a great sensation. Waistcoats and ties, and hammercloths, and a great many other things, were made "*à la* Giraffe." One might have thought that people had not really believed in the existence of such a curious creature until they saw him. The last fifty years have made us so familar with a variety of strange animals that we are not so easily astonished now, but it must be a grand thing to see a Giraffe in his native wilds. The amazing size and strength of the creature, combined with his utter harmlessness, his curious movements and strange mode of feeding, render him altogether one of the most interesting of animals, while he can be approached with perfect safety.

THE ZEBRA-HOUSE.

HERE are beautiful specimens of different kinds of Zebras, Wild Asses, and the strange Brazilian Tapir, who is also related to the Horse family, though very different in appearance.

The true Zebra is a native of the mountain districts of Southern Africa, far from the abodes of men. Its wonderful swiftness is proverbial. If it could only be tamed and trained like a horse or a donkey, it would be invaluable to mankind, but it has a most savage and untractable disposition, and evidently considers that it is made for ornament and not for use. It is certainly a beautiful animal, with its glossy skin striped evenly down to its very hoofs in brownish-black bars on a pale yellow ground, and must look most picturesque standing on its own craggy heights or racing over the hills. It is, however, most wild and difficult to approach.

Another variety, "Burchell's Zebra," inhabits the plains, and is found in great numbers near the Orange River. It congregates in herds of from eighty to a hundred, and occupies the same regions and delights in the same pastime as the brindled Gnu. Indeed, these two families seem to be on terms of the closest friendship, and to be indispensable to each other's happiness. Sir Cornwallis Harris describes this creature in this way:—"Fierce, strong, fleet, and surpassingly beautiful, there is perhaps no quadruped in the creation, not even excepting the mountain Zebra, more splendidly attired or presenting a picture of more singularly attractive beauty than this free-born son of the desert."

But we all feel a certain familiarity with the Zebra, owing to its invariably appearing in childish alphabets and alphabetical stories in a place of great importance

THE ZEBRA.

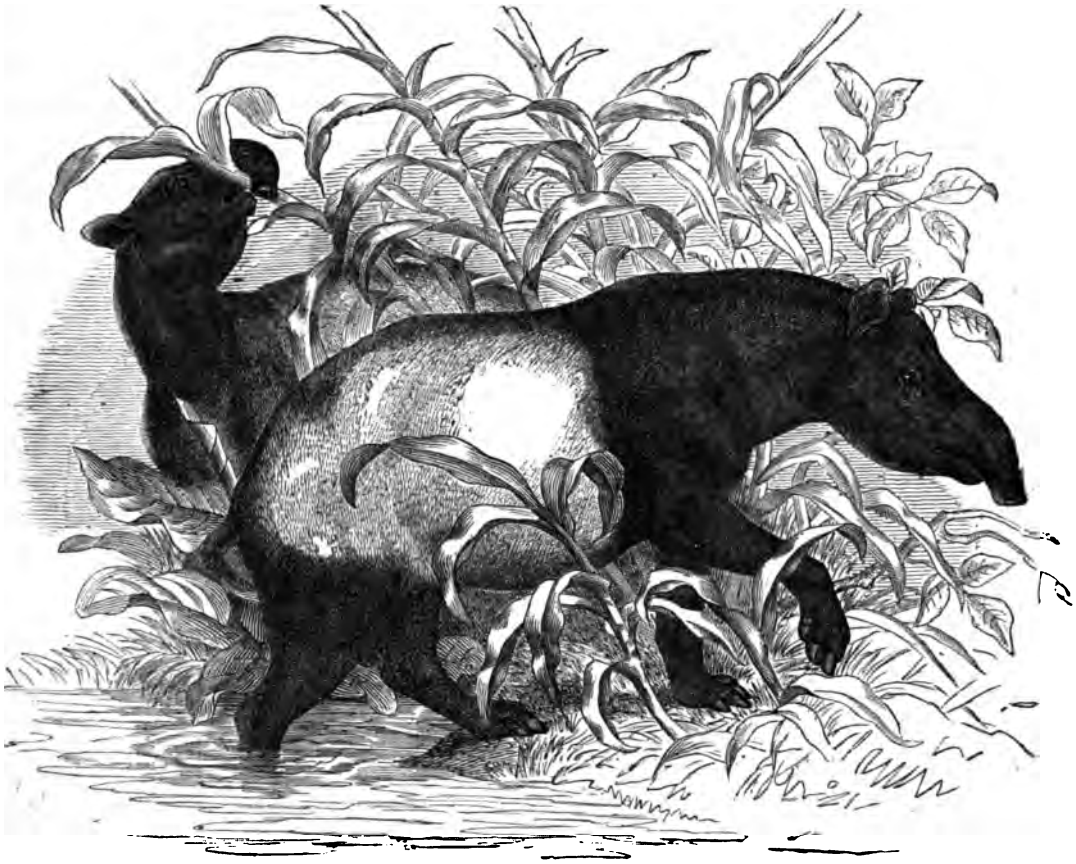
—the conclusion. There are so few animals, or, indeed, familiar objects of any kind, beginning with the letter "Z" that the Zebra has crept in in various stories and pictures where, had his name begun with any other letter, he would assuredly never have figured. A certain poetical alphabet in which I took great delight as a child, called "Aunt Affable's Ball," after a most graphic and natural account of the entertainment, ends thus:

> Y, the good Yeoman, brought when night was come,
> Z, the young Zebra, to fetch us all home.

I always had a misgiving that that yeoman and that Zebra owed their introduction into the story solely to their initial letters, and though I felt that it must be a most exciting and delightful ending to a party to be drawn home by a fine young Zebra

as represented in the picture, I realized that I could never look forward with any confidence to such a privilege.

In menageries Zebras are sometimes trained to draw vans and vehicles when they move from one place to another, but I believe they are never to be thoroughly trusted; and I heard of a serious accident being caused in a provincial Zoological Gardens from a Zebra having taken part in a procession.



INDIAN TAPIR.

The Brazilian Tapir is the hippopotamus of the New World, and has sometimes been mistaken for that animal, but it is very much smaller. It inhabits the woods and rivers of South America, and leads a solitary life, sleeping during the day and searching for food at night. It eats fruits, grass, and sugar-canes, but is not very particular about its diet, and swallows wood, clay, pebbles, and bones. One kept *by the naturalist* D'Azara gnawed his silver snuff-box to bits, and swallowed the

contents. It is a quiet, peaceable animal, but is hunted by the Indians, who think it very good to eat, though Europeans do not agree in this opinion. Tapirs are very fond of the water and swim and dive admirably, and, like the hippopotamus, take their young ones very soon into the lakes and rivers, and teach them to swim and let them plunge and frolic about. In Cayenne they are kept tame and allowed to walk about the streets as they please, and to wander into the woods, from which they always return in the evening to their homes to be fed. They very seldom utter any cry, and when they do so it is a very strange one for such big animals to make. It is like a sharp, shrill sort of whistle, and the Indians often bring them within shot of their poisoned arrows by imitating this cry. The tiger, as the natives call it, by which they mean the jaguar, is a terrible enemy to the poor Tapir. When he springs on its back, the Tapir rushes into the woods and tries to kill its assailant by dashing him against some large tree, and sometimes succeeds in dislodging him wounded. The Indian Tapir is larger than the American one, but very like him in habits. Instead of being the same dusky colour all over, he is very funnily marked, his head, shoulders, fore legs and hind legs being black, and the rest nearly white, so that he looks as if he had a white cloth thrown over him.

The Onager, or Wild Ass of the Asiatic deserts, is a most beautiful creature. The earliest account we have of it, except the passage in the Book of Job, is found in the works of Xenophon, who wrote more than three hundred years B.C. He describes it as wonderfully swift, so that mounted hunters had no chance of overtaking it, unless by posting relays of horses at points which it was likely to pass in its flight from the plain towards the mountains. Young's paraphrase on the Book of Job contains this beautiful allusion to him :—

> Didst thou from service the Wild Ass discharge,
> And break his bonds and bid him go at large,
> Through the wide waste, his ample mansion, roam,
> And lose himself in his unbounded home?

THE OSTRICH-HOUSE.

THE Ostrich family and its allies are distributed over the world in a peculiar manner. Each region which they inhabit has its own particular representative, and no other. The Ostrich is found only in Africa, the Cassowaries only in the Moluccas or Spice Islands, and other isles in the Indian Archipelago. The Emu belongs, as we saw in another part of the Gardens, to Australia, and the Rhea, of which there are three species, to South America. In New Zealand fossil bones have been discovered, showing that there must have once existed there a bird of this description, twice the height of an Ostrich. The natives of New Zealand, the Maoris, call this wonderful fossil bird the "Moa," and people have gone on hoping for a long time that living specimens of it might still be found in unexplored recesses of the islands, but I am afraid they have now given up the idea.

Ostriches are not very intelligent birds, and though certainly most remarkable to look at, are chiefly interesting to us on account of their plumes. Their feathers have always been in great request by European ladies, and, indeed, in olden times by gentlemen too. There is certainly no more graceful or becoming ornament in the hair, or drooping over the hat, and we must not speak disrespectfully of the bird which supplies it. The Ostrich has the character of being a silly neglectful mother, because she lays her eggs in a careless promiscuous sort of way, and leaves them to be hatched by the sun; but those who have watched her habits carefully, tell us that within the torrid zone it would only injure the eggs for her to sit on them, the sun's rays are quite powerful enough for the purpose. They also say that so far from being neglectful of them, she watches near them most jealously. In cooler latitudes she sits on them as carefully as a respectable barn-door mother.

Sometimes several Ostriches divide the task between them, laying their eggs close together, and taking it in turn to keep them warm. It is said that the Ostrich often leaves a few eggs outside the nest to feed the young ones with when they are hatched. The eggs are considered by Europeans, as well as by the natives, a great delicacy. The Hottentots, when tending their cattle, often find nests in the sands. They never take the eggs out with their hands, for fear the Ostriches should find out by the scent that they had been there, and desert the nest in consequence. They rake them out with a long stick as fast as the birds lay them, leaving one for a nest-egg, as we do in our hen-houses. One egg is enough for several people, and there are various ways of dressing them, but that which the Hottentots employ is considered the best: they *bury them* in hot ashes, and through a small hole at one end stir the contents round

and round till they become like an omelette. Vultures have a very clever way of getting at the eggs: the shell being too hard for their beaks to break, they drop stones down on them from a great height.

An Ostrich can swallow and digest almost anything,—leather, hair, iron, stones, or any article that you like to offer it.

HUNTING OSTRICHES.

Where Ostriches abound they often do great mischief to the farmers by coming in flocks into their fields and destroying the ears of the wheat, which they do so completely as to leave nothing but the bare straw behind. The body of the bird is no higher than the corn, so that when it bends down its long neck, it is completely hidden, and cannot be found out at a distance. On the least noise it rears its head, and has thus generally time to escape before the farmer can get within gunshot. It can run so swiftly that the fastest horse cannot overtake it when the wind is in its

favour, as its outstretched wings assist its flight immensely. For a successful chase the Arabs choose calm and warm weather, and, mounted on their swiftest horses, seek the birds in the plains. When the hunter comes within sight of one, he approaches gently, so as to keep it in sight without driving it to the mountains. The poor bird, not yet frightened, begins to run very quickly at first; but, as the hunters draw near, doubles its speed, and would soon be out of sight if it continued in a direct line. Instead of this, it loses its head altogether, and wheels about in circles, while the hunters dodge about so as to meet it at every turn; and at last, exhausted, and finding all escape hopeless, the poor creature sinks down.

It is told of the Ostrich that it buries its head in the sand when pursued by its enemies, thinking that it is hiding from them when it puts itself in the dark in this way; but I do not think there is much truth in this story: the poor bird is not quite so silly as that. The Ostrich is very easily tamed, and Ostrich-farming in Africa is a very profitable employment. They also farm them in South America; and, as the African bird has the finest plumage, they are trying to introduce the breed there, as well as their own Rhea.

In America the cock bird assists in hatching, and rolls the eggs together with his bill, bravely defending them from thieves. Our domestic cocks would not take this sort of trouble. The beautiful passage about the Ostrich in the Book of Job is thus paraphrased by Young:—

> Who in the stupid Ostrich has subdued
> A parent's care and fond inquietude?
> While far she flies, her scatter'd eggs are found
> Without an owner on the sandy ground;
> Cast out on Fortune, they at mercy lie,
> And borrow life from an indulgent sky;
> Adopted by the sun, in blaze of day
> They ripen under his prolific ray.

The Cassowary is a stately, powerful bird, standing about five feet high, though its neck is but of moderate length. Its general shape is very much that of the common guinea-fowl whom you have often heard crying "Come back," and whose rich hard-shelled eggs I daresay you may have eaten at breakfast. Instead, however, of a tough wattle on the top of its head like that of our guinea-fowl, it has a peculiar sort of bony helmet, and instead of pretty mottled plumage, it is covered with something much more like long hair. It shows some signs of wings, but they are a mere make-believe, and do not even, like those of the Ostrich, assist it in running. Its *three-toed feet* are very strong, and it strikes hard with them in self-defence. Its

head and neck are bare and look quite handsome, being of a purple blue. It is frequently kept tame like the Ostrich.

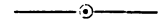
The Cassowary is a stupid, greedy bird, and, like the Ostrich, can digest almost anything. There is a bird in Australia called the Mooruk, which, even more than the Emu, resembles the Cassowary in its shape, hairy plumage, and general appearance. But the Mooruk, far from being stupid, has the playful habits which seem to

CASSOWARIES.

belong to the Australian birds in general. One that was kept in the Sydney Botanical Gardens used to amuse my father very much by the pranks it played. It was hardly ever at rest, and was continually throwing itself into strange attitudes. Its great delight was in frightening the other creatures in its neighbourhood, particularly the quiet sedate kangaroos. It would ruffle out all its wiry feathers like a fighting game-cock, drawing back its head into the middle of this curious frill, and then rush at any bird or beast within its reach as if it meant mischief; but it never hurt, and was quite content with scaring them.

With the Ostrich-house our little tour round the Gardens must end for the present. But we might go round it many hundred times, and still find fresh wonders and fresh interest in examining the birds, and beasts, and fishes, and thinking about their ways here and in their own countries. And if we should ever find ourselves in strange new parts of the world, and see the creatures in their own natural state, we shall look at them with all the more interest from knowing something about them already. To those who live in a city the privilege of having all these wonderful and beautifu.

animals brought together in a pleasant flower-garden, where they can walk about and examine them at their leisure, is a very great one; but for those who live in the country, and who have not this opportunity, there is a still greater pleasure of the same kind. Let them only look about them, with eyes to see, and listen with ears to hear. Let them study the habits of our own pretty wild animals, learn to distinguish the songs and plumage of the birds, and watch the wonderful ways of the insect world, and they may have for themselves an always beautiful and ever-increasing "Zoological Gardens."



It took Aunt Alice a long time to write out, for Charlie, all she could remember and find out about the animals in the Zoological Gardens, and Nelly was never so happy as when she saw her at work at it. But they did not keep poor Charlie waiting to hear it till it was all done. He had to lie on his back for a great many months, even longer than the doctor had feared at first. During all that time Aunt Alice read to the children every evening as far as she had written, and showed them the pictures; and, by the time the book was quite finished, Charlie was allowed to sit up a little. At last there came a bright summer day when he could be taken out in a Bath-chair. The first place he begged to be taken to was the Regent's Park Gardens. Aunt Alice and Nelly walked by the chair, and Nelly was wild with delight at having her brother out with her once more. She danced about by his side, and pointed out all the creatures she liked best, but she found that he knew very nearly as much about them as she did!

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